

# ATHLETES of GOD

Lives of the Saints for every day in the Year

By

SHIRLEY C. HUGHSON,  
O.H.C.

## **ROUMANIAN PILGRIMAGE**

By **MARGARET R. LOUGHBOROUGH**

Illustrated Edition, 4s. Without illustrations, paper cover, 2s. 6d.

The charm of Roumania and its people stands out clearly in these delightful sketches of a visit paid in the autumn of 1938, chiefly to the churches and monasteries.

**S.P.C.K., LONDON**

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LONDON

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## APOLOGIA

A BOOK on the Saints is of necessity not unlike a commentary on Holy Scripture. You run to see what a certain commentator says about a verse which has claimed your attention, and discover that it is the very verse he has entirely omitted to mention. There will be those who will look eagerly to see what has been said here of their favourite Saint, only to find that, so far as this collection is concerned, he does not exist ; for some care has been taken to omit from this volume no inconsiderable number of the obvious Saints whom everybody knows, and to revive the memory of certain members of the celestial choirs who, while well known in the courts of heaven, have been neglected and forgotten on earth.

In any event, many must be passed over. There are only three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, or three hundred and sixty-six at the most, and the Saints recorded in the Church's kalendars are 'a great multitude which no man can number.' Baring-Gould, in his monumental work on the Saints, manages to recount the history of over three thousand six hundred ; and he makes the same apology for omission that I am making here. He illustrates the difficulty by telling us that into one volume for the single month of October he has compressed the work of the Bollandists which was extended through ten great tomes.

The sketches in a book of this kind are inevitably uneven, for the obvious reason that the lives of the Saints were uneven. Speaking of these blessed ones, St. Paul tells us that 'one star differeth from another star in glory,' but they were all none the less stars of God. The author has been at no pains to make the sketches balance each other. After all, it is spiritual snobbishness to desire the acquaintance of the most distinguished of the Saints only.

The work is prepared on the assumption that the Saints are a merry folk, both in heaven and on earth, and that it behoves us to make merry with them. There are certain melancholy spirits in our time who think it a degree of irreverence to jest with the Saints. These are the same lugubrious souls who forbid children to play hide-and-seek on Sunday. But one of the holiest and wittiest of Saints has said, 'A Saint sad is a sad Saint.' The Saints were human and indulged a sense of humour, and this saying of St. Francis de Sales shows what a Saint thought a Saint should be.

A little nonsense now and then  
Is relished by the wisest men,

and surely none were wiser than the Saints. If they should know – and I have not the least doubt that they do – in the place of their joyous repose, what a dour spirit we often attribute to them, I opine that their first sensation would be one of shock ; but having recovered from that, they would fill all heaven with inextinguishable laughter at the thought of what fools we mortals be. To make the Saints human involves the risk of being too colloquial. The author has not permitted himself to be influenced by any such fear. Better to err on that side than on the side of a puritanic solemnity. To make the Saints human is to dignify them. Had they not been human, they had not been Saints. To make them less than human is to take from them their most alluring charm.

The author puts forth this work daring to hope that it will not be relegated to that unhappy category of books described by the late Father Tyrrell as the product of 'piety stimulated by trade.' He conceives that there is need of a book which will give the life and legend of one representative Saint for every day in the year.

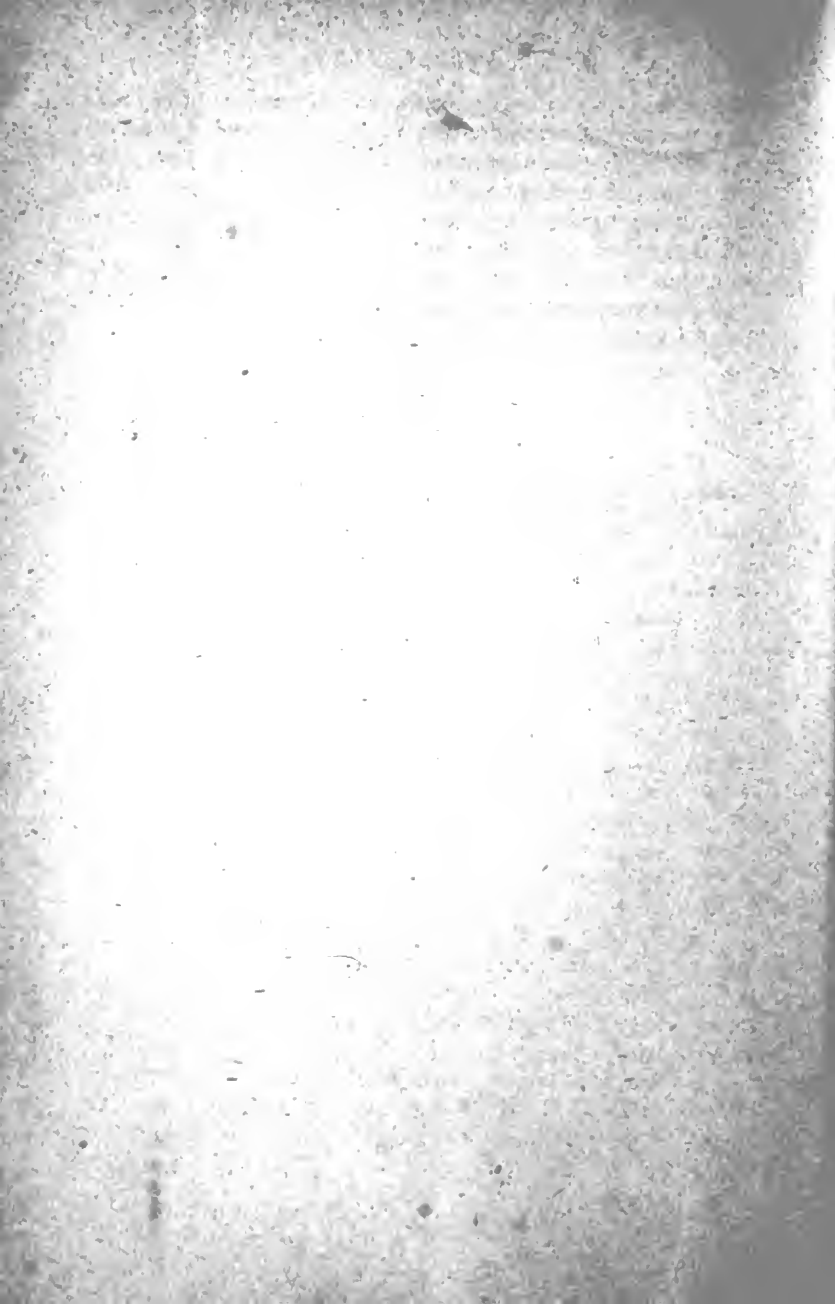
And to what end is such a book prepared? Let it be understood that names and acts are not here recorded

merely as of historical or biographical interest, but in order that we may be reminded that in the Communion of Saints we continually pray together with all God's holy ones. On each feast, therefore, ask the prayers of the Saints. Call upon them to pray for you ; and also to pray with you for all the objects and persons for which you intercede. If we can thus company daily with the Saints it is not likely that we shall company with the devil. It may prove - to invent a variant of the old proverb - that

A Saint every day  
Keeps the devil away.

S. C. H.

HOLY CROSS MONASTERY,  
WEST PARK, N.Y.  
*Holy Cross Day, 1930.*





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 Thomas Becket, B.M. A.D. 1170. December 29  
 Thomas of Hereford, B.C. A.D. 1282. October 2  
 Thomas of Villanova, B.C. A.D. 1555. September 22.  
 Transfiguration of our Lord. August 6  
 Trudpert, M. A.D. 643. April 26.  
 Trumwin, C. A.D. 686. December 2  
 URSULA, V.M. 5th Century. October 21  
 VALERY, AB. A.D. 622. December 12  
 Venantius Fortunatus, B.C. A.D. 600. December 14  
 Victor, M. A.D. 304. July 21  
 Vincent, M. A.D. 303. January 22  
 Vincent of Lerins, C. A.D. 450. May 24  
 Vincent de Paul, C. A.D. 1660. July 19  
 Virgilius, Ab. A.D. 618. March 5  
 Vitalis, C. 7th Century. January 11  
 Vladimir, C. A.D. 1015. July 15.  
 WALBURGA, V. A.D. 779. February 25  
 Waltheof, Ab. A.D. 1160. August 3  
 Wenceslas, M. A.D. 929. September 28  
 Willebold, C. A.D. 1230. November 2  
 William of Roskilde, B.C. A.D. 1076. September 2  
 Willibald, B.C. A.D. 790. July 7  
 Willibrord, B.C. A.D. 739. November 7  
 Winefrid, V.M. 7th Century. November 3  
 Wulsin, B.C. A.D. 983. January 8  
 Wulstan, B.C. A.D. 1095. January 19  
 ZACHARIAS, B.C. A.D. 631. February 21  
 Zacharias, B.C. A.D. 752. March 15  
 Zeno, M. A.D. 250. December 20  
 Zita, V. A.D. 1278. April 27

JANUARY I

*ST. TELEMACHUS, M.*

(A.D. 404)

THE first day of January is consecrated in honour of our Lord's Circumcision, but as He ever delights to have His Saints with Him, the Church has also assigned this day as a memorial of certain of those who suffered for Him.

Among the horrid abuses of paganism which had survived the advent of Christianity in Rome, were the gladiatorial shows. Ever since the beginning of the Church, men had protested against their cruelty and barbarity. These games seem to have been a survival of the widespread ancient practice of offering human sacrifices at the funerals of great chieftains. In Rome originally the games were held only at great public funerals. About the end of the second century, they began to be frowned upon, and Constantine, the first Christian emperor, in 325, forbade them. In 404, however, Honorius celebrated his victory over the Goths by reviving them.

St. Telemachus, a holy hermit in the East, having learned of the horrors of these contests which were held under the patronage of an emperor who called himself a Christian, and in which men were made to slaughter their fellows with all the barbarities of savages, determined to give his life, if necessary, as a protest against this unchristian sport. He made his way to Rome, and as the combatants were in the midst of an orgy of murder in the arena, he leaped down into their midst and sought to interfere. The blood-drunk Roman mob, enraged at their sport being stopped, burst into the arena, and tore him to pieces. Struck with horror at the murder of the holy monk, Honorius, the emperor, issued an edict banning for ever the abominable sports.

JANUARY 2

*ST. MACARIUS THE YOUNGER, Ab.*

(A.D. 394)

This Saint is called 'the Younger' to distinguish him from St. Macarius the Great, who was contemporary with him. He was born in Alexandria early in the fourth century. Appalled at the evil that festered in every rank of society about him, as a young man he devoted himself to God in the Egyptian deserts. For sixty years he gave himself to a life of prayer, acting as spiritual guide to multitudes of all sorts and conditions of men who sought his counsel. Amongst men singularly imbued with the spirit of prayer and self-denial, he was easily first.

Many stories are told of the charity and generosity of these desert hermits. On one occasion a friend sent Macarius a luscious cluster of grapes, newly gathered at the beginning of the vintage. Bethinking himself of a neighbouring monk who was sick, he sent the grapes to him. This monk remembered another of the brethren who was also sick, and passed them on to him, who in his turn sent them to yet another brother. And so the grapes made the round of all the hermits' cells, until they were brought and a second time presented to Macarius. Such was the spirit of brotherly love that reigned amongst these holy men of old. Hard on themselves, they were ever tender and loving to others. On one occasion, Macarius was annoyed by a gnat which bit him in his cell, and promptly swatted it. Ashamed at his loss of patience over so slight a mortification, he punished himself by dwelling several months in the marshes of Scete, subjecting himself to the ravages of the noxious insects which frequented that region.

St. Macarius, like so many other holy men and women, loved the wild things of the desert and forests, and exercised

a powerful influence over them. One day a hyena brought one of her whelps and laid it at his feet. He looked at the cub, and saw that it was blind. Touched at the grief of the mother, the old man prayed, and touched its eyes, and in a moment it saw plain. He went to his rest in the year 394.

JANUARY 3

*ST. GENEVIÈVE, V.*

(A.D. 512)

This Saint is the patron of Paris. She was born at Nanterre in France in 432, and as a child kept her father's sheep. She entered the Religious Life when she was fifteen years old, being admitted to her vows by Germanus, the great Bishop of Auxerre. She lived in Paris most of her life, and by her prayers and charities endeared herself to the people of that ancient city. She figured prominently in several important episodes in the history of Gaul. When Attila, the great Hun leader, was devastating Gaul, spreading fire and slaughter everywhere, so much so that the terrified populace gave him the title of the 'Scourge of God,' St. Geneviève counselled the people of the city to be of good cheer, assuring them that God would protect them. They scoffed at her prayers in their despair ; but prayer prevailed and the city was spared.

So great was her influence with Childeric, the Frankish king, that, although he was a pagan, he was unable to refuse her anything. On one occasion he returned from war with a great number of captives whom he was resolved to put to death. Fearing lest Geneviève should intercede for them, he took them beyond the city walls, and ordered the gates to be locked behind him. Hearing of what was being done, in a paroxysm of compassion, she rushed to the gate only to find it fast closed. But, the old legend says, at the

touch of charity, the bars fell from their place, and pursuing the king, she fell on her knees before him, and would not stay her pleadings until all the condemned men were pardoned.

The Saint died at the ripe age of eighty-nine in 512. Her relics are in the Church of St. Étienne du Mont in Paris.

JANUARY 4

*ST. GREGORY OF LANGRES, B.C.*

(A.D. 540)

Among the many Gregories in the Church's kalendar was one who lived at Langres in France in the sixth century. He was a man of senatorial rank, and was the chief magistrate of the city of Autun, a married man and the saintly head of a saintly family. Some time after the death of his wife, there was a vacancy in the bishopric of Autun, and the citizens clamoured for Gregory as their chief pastor. He protested his unworthiness, but the people knew better than that, and would not take his nay. On entering upon his sacred office, he divided his property amongst his children, and lived a life of self-denial and poverty.

It was his custom at midnight to rise secretly when all others were asleep, and going to the church, to spend many hours in prayer and singing the praises of God. One night a deacon attached to the cathedral saw him and followed him to the church, watching him, as for many hours the bishop knelt, rapt in silent prayer. He then heard him chanting a psalm of praise, and immediately the melody was caught up by a multitude of voices of indescribable sweetness until the lofty vault of the church rang with the glorious anthem. Awed and affrighted at his temerity in breaking in upon this celestial company, the watcher fled from the church to tell his brethren of the marvel that he had heard and seen.

One day, about the year 540, as he was making a visitation of some parishes in his diocese on foot, St. Gregory was seized with a fever, and in a few days joined the invisible choir whose heavenly melody it had been given him to join while on his earthly pilgrimage. He is often represented in art standing before a church door which an angel opens to him, a reminiscence of the report of the deacon who watched him at his midnight prayers, and declared that when the Saint reached the cathedral door, like the gate of St. Peter's prison, it opened to him of its own accord. He fulfilled in a marked way one of the apostolic requirements for the episcopate, he ruled his own household well. When his labours were over, his son Tetricus succeeded him as Bishop of Autun, and following the footsteps of his saintly father, his name was also placed in the Church's kalendar of Saints.

## JANUARY 5

*ST. SIMON STYLITES, C.*

(A.D. 460)

The ignorant world of our day has made a jest of the memory of St. Simon Stylites. In the days of the Church's spiritual glory, he was one of her chiefest ornaments. He was born in the village of Gesa, near Antioch in Pisidia, about the year 400. One day in church he heard the words of the Gospel, 'Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.' On enquiring their meaning, he was told of the blessedness of prayer and sorrow for sin, and he resolved henceforth to lead a life of penitence.

After some years he established himself about forty-five miles from Antioch, and mounting a pillar, preached to the great multitudes which were drawn to him by the rumours of his holiness, which penetrated every part of the Roman Empire. For all his eccentricity, as we should call it, few

Saints were less fanatical. At a word of counsel from some neighbouring monks, he came down from his pillar. He cast away his chain at the suggestion of a visitor. 'For thirty-seven years,' writes Father Dalgairns, 'his sleepless eyes looked down with pity and compassion on the crowds which came to consult him. . . . From three o'clock in the afternoon till set of sun he preached from that strange pulpit to the most motley congregation ever assembled to hear the word of God. Wild bedouin Arabs, mountaineers from the highlands of Armenia, banditti from the Isaurian hills, blacks from Ethiopia, were mingled with the perfumed counts of the East. . . . Wicked women looked from a distance on that strange figure, high in air, with hands lifted up to heaven and body bowed down with fear of God ; and they burst into an agony of tears, and renounced their sins for ever. Thousands of heathen were converted by his preaching, and an Arab chief, himself a pagan, ascribed it to him that under their tents were Christian bishops and priests. The savage persecution of the Christians in Persia was stopped by respect for his name. Many a wrong did he redress, for tyrants trembled at his threats ; many a sorrow did he soothe. A wonderful sight was that long, painful life of suffering and supernatural prayer in the midst of that vast, corrupt and effeminate East.'

Anthony, one of his disciples, relates in words of moving tenderness the death of his master : ' It befell one day that he bowed himself in prayer and remained so three days, Friday, the Sabbath, and the Lord's Day. Then I was terrified, and went up to him on the pillar and stood before his face, and said, " Master, arise, bless us, for the people have been waiting three days and three nights for a blessing from thee." But he answered me not, so I said to him again, " Wherefore dost thou grieve me, my master ? I beseech thee, put out thine hand to me." And seeing that he did not answer, I thought to tell no one, for I feared to touch him ; and standing about half an hour, I bent down, and



put my ear to listen, and there was no sound of breathing. And so I understood that he rested in the Lord, and turning faint, I wept most bitterly ; and bending down, I kissed his eyes, and I said, "Master, remember me in thy holy rest." '

JANUARY 6

*ST. MACRA, V.M.*

(A.D. 303)

The Diocletian persecution of 303 was the last of the great official efforts of Rome to extirpate Christianity ; and it was the first in which, over the entire empire, the people were called upon to suffer indiscriminately with their clergy. St. Macra was a virgin living at Soissons in Gaul at this time. Rictiovarus was the resident governor, and with senseless brutality he sought to stamp out the Faith of Christ. St. Macra, a young girl of tender years, was brought before him, and enraged him by her resolute stand. She was exposed to the fire, her breasts were barbarously cut off, and she was flung upon a bed of red-hot coals. Spreading out her hands to heaven, she cried, in the hearing of the multitude, "O Lord Jesus Christ, who madest me to triumph over the chains in my dungeon, and madest the fire as sweet to my body as the morning dew, I pray Thee receive my soul, for the time is come to set my spirit free." And so saying, she entered into her rest. The Diocletian persecution was the last despairing effort of paganism to overcome the Faith, and it perished in its own futile rage. Nine years later the Emperor Constantine was converted, and the Faith for which St. Macra and millions of others had died became the religion of the Roman Empire.

JANUARY 7

*ST. LUCIAN, M.*

(A.D. 311)

This Saint seems to have been the first scientific student and textual critic of the Scriptures. He lived in the early fourth century, and undertook to purge the Old and New Testaments of the clerical errors which had crept into them through the carelessness of transcribers. It must be remembered that in that day copies of the Bible had to be made laboriously by hand, and mistakes could easily slip in. His work was of great help to St. Jerome, who, nearly a century later, translated the Bible into Latin, which was the common speech of the people of the western world.

Lucian was one of the last Christians to suffer for the Faith in the imperial persecutions. He was martyred in 311. A beautiful story is told of how in prison, where he was the only priest, being cruelly bound fast upon his back, his arms only being free, he celebrated the Holy Mass on his naked bosom as an altar, and gave the consolation of Holy Communion to his fellow-sufferers for the cause of Christ.

"This breast of mine," he said, "shall be the table, and I reckon it will not be less esteemed of God than one of inanimate material ; and ye," he said to the brethren about him, "shall be the walls of a holy temple standing round about me."

JANUARY 8

*ST. WULSIN, B.C.*

(A.D. 983)

Those who are familiar with the churches of the south of England will remember the beautiful abbey of Sherborne, one of the abbey churches in England which is still

devoted to the worship of God. Sherborne was formerly the seat of a bishopric. St. Wulsin occupied this see in the tenth century, having been transferred from Westminster Abbey of which he was the abbot. At Sherborne he made a monastic foundation. He was one of those Saints who are little known on earth, but whose names are written in the Book of Life. His sanctity was manifest to all during his lifetime, but still more in the hour of his death. When he was close to his end, as his brethren stood about his bed, the eyes of his understanding were opened, and he began to sing, "I see the heavens opened and Jesus standing at the right hand of God," which song he uttered without faltering ; and singing, he died. This was in the year 983.

## JANUARY 9

*SS. JULIAN, M., AND BASILISSA, C.*

(ABOUT A.D. 300)

These Saints were a holy wedded couple who lived a life of great sanctity in Egypt at the beginning of the fourth century, devoting themselves to the care of the poor. They had much worldly goods, and they devoted all they had to the care of the outcast and afflicted. It is said that, at one time, they were caring for no fewer than a thousand indigent folk. Nor was their care of them merely a giving of money, but with their own hands they relieved their sufferings, counting it a high privilege thus to minister to Christ in the persons of those who needed them.

But in these early days the hearts of men were very hard, and although these holy Saints had given of their substance and of themselves, for the help of others, this stood them in no good stead when the persecutions arose. Quite the contrary, their having done these good works in the Name of Christ was brought against them as a crime. During the Diocletian persecution they were again and again

brought before the courts, and as often as they were brought, they bore brave witness to Christ. St. Basilissa endured seven stern persecutions, and at last was permitted to end her days in peace. Her husband, however, received the crown of martyrdom, and shed his blood for the Saviour whom he loved, and for whom he rejoiced to suffer.

As he was being dragged to the place of execution, the boys of a school turned out to see the athlete of God pass by to his death. As the procession filed by, one of the boys, Celsus by name, exclaimed, "I see angels extending a glorious crown to him. I too believe in Jesus Christ." The boy's father thought the Saint had bewitched his son, and he had them delivered to terrible torments. But, steadfast to the end, they received the crown of life, the vision of which had been given to the innocent youth.

#### JANUARY 10

#### *ST. MARCIAN, C.*

(A.D. 476)

Marcian was a priest of Constantinople who died about 476. His piety caused him to be promoted to great dignity in the Church, and he used the emoluments of his office to repair and build many churches to the glory of God.

He was especially devoted to the work of rescuing those unhappy women whose sins had caused them to be the outcasts of society. He sought them out in their haunts of evil, found them honest occupations, and by his pleading and tears convinced them of their sin, and placed their feet in a better way. He might well be taken as the patron of the rescue works of our own time.

On the occasion of the dedication of the church of St. Anastasia, the Saint was on his way to the service clad in his sacerdotal garments, when he was accosted by a

beggar who asked an alms. Having no money on his person, he drew off his undergarment, gave it to him, and hurried on his way, hoping that his nakedness would not be discovered. When he arrived at the church, the emperor was present, and he was appointed to sing the Mass. Mortified at his unclad condition, he proceeded, hoping that it would not be observed. But all the great concourse, as he moved about the altar, saw beneath his chasuble a garment of pure gold which flashed in the light as he walked. The patriarch was offended, and rebuked him for wearing a garment that better befitted an emperor. Falling at the feet of the patriarch, he denied any knowledge of such apparel, and on lifting aside his chasuble, he was seen to be naked but for his sacred vestments.

## JANUARY 11

*ST. VITALIS, C.*

(7TH CENTURY)

We generally think of Gaza as the scene of Samson's mighty feat of carrying away the brazen gates with their massive pillars when his foes sought to lock him in and seize him. But the little Palestinian city has other glories than the labours of the Hebrew Hercules. Twenty-five hundred years after his time, in the seventh century, this little city was made illustrious by the life of St. Vitalis, a monk, who devoted himself to the work, unusual in his time, of rescuing fallen women. His activities caused no little scandal amongst his contemporaries, and when he went to the wicked city of Alexandria, complaints against him were brought to John the Bishop. Bishops in those days were the friends and defenders of their flocks, and the saintly John, knowing well the sanctity of Vitalis, rebuked his accuser, saying, "Remember Constantine, of pious

memory, who said that priests should not be lightly accused, and that if he should detect a priest or a monk in a wrong, he would draw his purple imperial robe over him that none be scandalised."

But despite the bishop's protection, the scandal-loving people of Alexandria persisted in their ugly gossip about the holy man. One day, when he had been ministering to a poor abandoned woman, a man who saw him come from her house struck him over the head, exclaiming, "How long, rascal, do you outrage Christ by not mending your ways?" Vitalis replied, "Believe me, friend, that thou shalt receive from me, an obscure monk, such a stroke that all Alexandria shall ring with it." A few hours later his accuser learned from the woman herself the truth of the case, and smitten in conscience, he ran forth proclaiming the innocence of the Saint, and how he had been maligned. A great crowd gathered at the house where Vitalis humbly dwelt, and his late accuser, crying, "Pardon me my violence, my Father, thou man of God," forced a way into the house. There, kneeling upright, with clasped hands, was Vitalis, dead, with a great calm upon his face. On the desk before him was a paper upon which he had written, 'Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who shall bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart.'

JANUARY 12

*ST. BENEDICT BISCOP, Ab.*

(A.D. 690)

This Saint was a young Saxon nobleman. He was born in 638, and, until he was twenty-five years old, was a courtier in the palace of Oswy, King of Northumbria. Renouncing his honours and property, he became a monk

at Lerins, the holy island on the Mediterranean coast of France, which gave so many Saints to the Church. After several years he joined the household of Archbishop Theodore, and was appointed by him abbot of the great monastery of St. Augustine at Canterbury. After two years, Benedict resigned this dignity and made a journey to Rome. On his return, he repaired to his own country, and on a tract of land granted him by King Egfrid, he founded the great monastery of Wearmouth, not far from Durham.

Among his disciples at Wearmouth was Bede, the devout boy who was destined, under Benedict's guidance, to become a Saint and the historian of the Saxon Church. Shortly after Bede's arrival a great epidemic broke out among the brethren, and all were prostrated save the abbot and the little boy who, at this time, was not yet in his teens. Grievous was the burden that fell upon these two of attending the sick and dying, and burying the dead, as well as maintaining the life of the cloister. For several days so great was the pressure that the singing of the Divine Office in the choir was suspended. Then the holy abbot could no longer stand the deprivation. Without abating for a moment the care of the sick, they went to the choir at the appointed hours, and there the old man blended the broken tones of his voice with the silver sweetness of the young boy's singing, and Vespers and Lauds were no more wanting to God.

Montalembert tells us that these two monastic figures, the old man and the child, standing in the dawn of English Christianity, represent to us the mystery of the Church's joyful discipline ; ' the one already mature and illustrious, and the other an obscure child, destined to fame, singing all alone the praises of God in their cloister, depopulated by death, and awaiting the future with resigned, yet unconquerable, faith.'

St. Benedict was the first Saxon ecclesiastic who showed his countrymen how to dedicate the beauty of art to the

worship of God. He built the first stone churches England had seen, and he also was the first to decorate the sanctuary, and enclose the windows in the glory of stained glass. He taught our rude forefathers of the Saxon world to worship God in the beauty of holiness. He died on this day in 690, at the age of sixty-two, a worthy Saxon representative of the great monastic patriarch of the West, whose Holy Rule he introduced into Britain, and whose name and habit he bore without spot or blemish.

JANUARY 13

*ST. HILARY, B.C.*

(A.D. 368)

St. Hilary of Poitiers was a pagan of Gaul, and a married man with a family ; but on being converted to Christianity, he became one of the great champions of the Faith. He lived in the age when the Church was struggling against the Arian heresy which declared that our Lord was only the first of all of God's creatures. He was banished by the Arian emperor, but wherever he went, he continued his splendid warfare in behalf of the Faith once delivered to the Saints.

The heretic Arians of the East were terrified when Phrygia was appointed as the place of his banishment, for they well knew they could never hold their own against his learning and holiness. They begged the emperor to send him back where he belonged, which he did, and to the unbounded joy of his flock he was permitted to return to his see, and there died in 368, one of the most honoured figures of the Church throughout the world.



JANUARY 14

*ST. FELIX OF NOLA, C.*

(A.D. 250)

This Saint was a native of Nola in Campania. In the Decian persecution of 250 he was thrown into prison for the crime of being a Christian. The ancient legend says that, like St. Peter of old, he was released by an angel. Being hunted by the soldiers, he came face to face with them on the road. "Have you met Felix, the priest?" they demanded. "No," he replied calmly, "I have not met him," whereupon they hastened on in their pursuit, while he, enjoying his joke, no doubt, climbed through a small hole in a broken wall and hid himself. Realising the trick that had been played on them, the soldiers returned hot-foot, but when they came to the wall through which they suspected he had escaped, the hole was covered with the web of a spider. Believing that no one had passed that way, they gave over the pursuit. The persecution ceased shortly afterwards, and the Saint lived for years, edifying the Church by the holiness of his life. This story of the spider has been told of many persons in history, but the incident in the life of St. Felix would seem to be the original of it.

JANUARY 15

*ST. PAUL, THE FIRST HERMIT, C.*

(A.D. 341)

When the Decian persecution raged in Egypt, a wealthy Christian youth, named Paul, went into the desert to escape the storm. He found a commodious cave in which he spent several months in a life of prayer. When the persecution passed, so sweet did he find this unbroken

communion with God, that he gave up all that he had, and devoted himself to the solitary life. He was the first of the great army of hermits which went out to serve God in solitude.

For sixty years he lived alone in the desert. In the meantime, St. Anthony was living his life of prayer not far away. God revealed the presence of Paul to him, and he set out to find the aged hermit, with whom he had many hours of spiritual converse. Anthony then returned to his hermitage, and coming back after a few days, he found the Saint kneeling upright as though in prayer, but the spirit had flown. St. Paul is said to have died in 341 at the extraordinary age of one hundred and thirteen years.

JANUARY 16

*ST. HONORATUS, Ab.*

(A.D. 429)

Near Toulon there lies in the Mediterranean Sea an island whose fame has gone to the ends of the earth because of the sanctity of those who for many centuries lived on it. It is the island of Lerins. The monastic foundation there was made by St. Honoratus in the fifth century. He was the son of a nobleman, who, observing the boy's devotion, told his older brother to turn him, by temptation and worldly allurements, from his ascetical ways. But the temptations of the world were powerless in conflict with the sweet and attractive majesty of the young Saint, and instead of being led astray, it was he who won his dissolute brother to a life of holiness. After many vicissitudes, Honoratus at last found repose at Lerins, and his sanctity drew to him men from every nation in the Christian world. The island swarmed with serpents, and the legend tells us that by the power of his saintliness he drove them forth.

There are few things in monastic history more beautiful than the picture that has been handed down to us of the paternal tenderness of Honoratus for the family of monks which he gathered about him. He watched their sleep, their food, their labours, that each might serve God best according to the measure of his strength. One of them received a letter from him written on a wax tablet. When he read the sweet and gracious words which his father in God had addressed to him, he exclaimed, "He has restored the honey to the wax." St. Honoratus was constrained against his will to accept the bishopric of Arles, which he administered with holy zeal for three years. He died, in the arms of his beloved disciple St. Hilary, in 429.

JANUARY 17

*ST. ANTHONY OF EGYPT, Ab.*

(3RD CENTURY)

St. Anthony was born of well-to-do Christian parents in Upper Egypt in 251. One day in church he heard the words read, 'If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast, and give to the poor; and come and follow Me, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven.' The words were like a trumpet summons to his soul. Without delay, he disposed of his possessions, which were not inconsiderable, and making his way into the desert, began a life of continual prayer. His action was a challenge to Satan, who was swift to accept it. Amazing stories are told of the temptations with which the adversary assailed him, temptations which increased in proportion as the strength of his holy resolution increased. Once, through all the long night, he fought against the powerful allurements of the evil one, but with dawn came peace. Exhausted with the struggle, he cried aloud, "Where wert Thou, my Lord and Master ?

Why didst not Thou come to help me in conflict with these loathsome things ? ” At his cry his cell was filled with a gentle glow of heavenly radiance, and a voice replied, “ Be of good cheer, My son. All through the darkness I was by thee and within thee. My hand upheld thee ; and because thou hast fought well against Mine enemies, I will give thee to sit with Me in My Kingdom.”

When he was about fifty-five years of age, St. Anthony gave up his solitary life, and gathering together the choicest spirits out of the many who begged the privilege of being his disciples, he founded a great monastery in the desert. There for more than half a century he lived in this school of prayer ; instructing many in the heavenly life, and consulted by multitudes, from the emperor who sent embassies to seek his counsel, to the peasant who found in him a tender father, never too busy with his labours to give ear to his troubles. He lived to the ripe age of one hundred and five years. He began his service for God in the days when it was a crime punishable by fearful torture and death to be a Christian ; he lived to see the cross supersede the eagles on the Roman standards, and when he lay dead, all the Roman world mourned that a spiritual father, tender and wise and strong, had been taken from them.

JANUARY 18

*ST. PRISCA, V.M.*

(A.D. 55)

Quite a different Saint from the last was St. Prisca. She was a little girl who lived in the city of Rome about twenty years after our Lord's Ascension. She was accused of being a Christian, and was ordered to sacrifice to the gods. No inducement or threat could move her. She was beaten and

thrown into prison. Amid the darkness she was comforted by a vision of angels. The following day she was thrown to the lions in the arena for the sport of the Roman mob, but the wild beasts were kinder to her than were the cruel executioners, and a fierce lion lovingly fawned at her feet and refused to hurt her. Finally, after dreadful tortures, she was slain with a sword. An eagle is said to have guarded her body until the Christians took it away for reverent burial.

JANUARY 19

*ST. WULSTAN, B.C.*

(A.D. 1095)

When William the Conqueror established himself in England and began, with a rough and often sacrilegious hand, to set the affairs of the English Church in order according to his own ideas, he found in the see of Worcester a simple-hearted old Saxon prelate named Wulstan. This old man had protested his unworthiness when he was chosen bishop, but being sternly rebuked for his obstinacy, and lovingly urged to the acceptance of the post by the saintly king, Edward the Confessor, he yielded.

His rusticity did not, however, please the sleek Norman ecclesiastics, and even the saintly Lanfranc thought him unsuited to the episcopal office. Accordingly in 1074 a council was assembled at Westminster Abbey to judge the question, and they speedily decided that his ignorance debarred him, and commanded him to surrender his episcopal ring and staff. The ring is the symbol that the bishop is wedded to his diocese before God, and this the old man declared he would not give up in life or in death. What God had joined together he would have no part in putting asunder. His staff symbolised his jurisdiction

over his flock in the Church of God. When it was demanded of him, addressing Lanfranc, he said, "My Lord Archbishop, I am well aware of my ignorance. When this burden was laid upon me, I would have fled from it, but the council and my lord the king would not take my nay. I know my unfitness and I gladly yield up my jurisdiction ; but I give it up not to you, but to him from whose hand I received it."

He then strode up to the tomb of St. Edward, and striking the staff into the stone sarcophagus, exclaimed, "Edward, my lord and king, receive this staff, and surrender it to whom thou wilt." Wulstan then laid aside his pontifical habit, and going to the benches where the monks sat, took the lowest place amongst them. Then was seen a great marvel, for the staff stood upright, its point buried in the solid stone. Full of wonder, the archbishop bade Gundolf, Bishop of Rochester, to whom the vacant see had been promised, to fetch the crozier ; but, for all his efforts, no inch would it budge ; nor would the stubborn stone give it up either to the archbishop or even to the king himself. With all his humility, one cannot believe that the good Wulstan did not from his lowly place amongst the brothers enjoy the discomfiture of his enemies, for, tug as they would, St. Edward held fast the staff.

At last, Lanfranc acknowledged himself defeated, and humbly approaching the old man, he said, "My brother, truly God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble. Take again the charge of which we have unjustly deprived thee, and which we now commit to thee once more." Wulstan then took his staff again, to the joy of his humble flock who had so long enjoyed his loving rule.

He died in 1095, and was buried with his episcopal ring on his hand. He would not yield it in life, and they did not take it from him in death.

JANUARY 20

*ST. SEBASTIAN, M.*

(A.D. 303)

This blessed martyr was a native of Milan. He rose to the rank of tribune in the imperial army, and commanded the military post in his native city. During the persecution of Diocletian in 303, he not only used his influence to save his fellow-Christians from persecution, but he waited on them in prison, and the exhortations of the distinguished military officer strengthened many to stand fast in the Faith.

Denounced to the emperor, he was ordered to be shot to death with arrows. Left for dead, the widow of a martyr whom he had sought to save dressed his wounds and brought him back to consciousness. On recovering, he one day heard the trumpets sounding the approach of the emperor. Placing himself in the roadway, he pleaded with that potentate to cease his harrying of the Christians. Diocletian, enraged at his temerity, ordered him beaten to death with clubs. This sentence was carried out with every barbarity.

JANUARY 21

*ST. AGNES, V.M.*

(A.D. 303)

St. Agnes was a child-saint of Rome, who perished when the great persecution of Diocletian swept the length of the civilised world in 303. When she was thirteen years old, the son of the city prefect wished to espouse her in marriage, but she refused him, declaring that she was espoused to one

husband, even Christ. Urged to abandon her Faith on the ground that she was a child and unable to judge of such things, she replied with a wisdom beyond her years, "I may be a child, but faith lies not in years, but in the heart." She was then placed in a house of evil fame, where her lover pursued her, but, as to Daniel in the lions' den, God sent His angel to protect her from these foes more cruel than lions.

After being tortured in flames, she was finally led out to be beheaded. So calm and pure and beautiful did she appear that the executioner found it hard to nerve himself for the fatal stroke. Kneeling, clad in a white robe, with her transfigured face lifted up to heaven, she received the final blow. 'And thus, bathed in her roseate blood,' writes the ancient chronicler, 'Christ betrothed to Himself His martyr-bride.'

She is represented in art with a lamb, indicative of her purity of soul. She is the patron of young girls.

JANUARY 22

*ST. VINCENT, M.*

(A.D. 303)

St. Vincent was a deacon of Spain, and was to that country what the deacon Laurence was to Italy. In the persecution of Diocletian in 303, he was apprehended and given the opportunity of saving his life by renouncing Christ. Refusing with indignation, he was put to such tortures as beggar description. His shattered body was then cast into a dungeon, and at midnight his jailor, looking into his cell, saw him walking amidst a great company of ministering angels, praising God with them. So powerfully did the vision impress the man that he was converted, and himself ministered to the holy deacon's comfort. It



was to no avail, however, for in a few hours he gained the crown which gave him his eternal place amongst the angelic choirs.

About two hundred and fifty years later, Childebert, the King of Paris, was besieging Saragossa, and observing the citizens making a solemn procession, praying for the deliverance of their city, he asked what relic they were carrying. Being told that it was the stole of St. Vincent, he was so impressed with their piety that he sent to them an embassy, offering to raise the siege if they would present him with the stole. This they agreed to do, and the king took it back to Paris, and built for its reception the church of St. Vincent, now known as St. Germain des Prés, which is at this day one of the great churches of Paris.

JANUARY 23

*ST. JOHN THE ALMSGIVER, B.C.*  
(A.D 616)

This Saint was the Patriarch of Alexandria in the early seventh century. His title was derived from the fact that he continually gave all that he had to the poor, and sometimes gave away what other people had too. Like most of the Saints, he had a keen sense of humour. On one occasion a worldly bishop named Troilus was visiting him, and among the other sights of the city which he showed him was the slums with their many poor, all of whom were dear to the patriarch's heart.

Now it happened that this bishop had set his mind on buying a handsome silver cup which he had seen in a jeweller's shop. He had put thirty pounds in his pocket for this purpose, and intended going for it as soon as he could shake off this tiresome patriarch, who was totally ignorant of artistic things, and bored his guest to extinction

with his continual conversation about his poor. A throng of crippled folk crowded about them, whereupon St. John said to his guest, "I see you have a good deal of money in your wallet; just give it to these poor people, please." Troilus was unable to refuse, and his precious thirty pounds went to the poor and not to the silversmith. The man was so troubled at the trick the patriarch had played on him that he took to his bed, sick. Having carried his joke far enough, John went to see him, and said, "By the way, I borrowed thirty pounds of you the other day, and if you are so disposed, I will repay you now." The avaricious man made no secret of how he was disposed regarding the matter, and promptly recovered his health.

On another occasion a wealthy friend, hearing that the Saint had only one old tattered blanket on his bed, bought a very handsome and expensive rug, and sent it to him. The Saint slept under it one night, but bethinking himself of some poor people who had no blanket at all, he sold it the next day and gave them the money. His friend, hearing of this, was much distressed, and re-purchasing the rug, sent it to him again, whereupon St. John sold it the second time, and again the third. "Well," said the Saint, "if this keeps on I shall have money enough for all my poor. We shall see who will become tired first, he of buying, or I of selling, the blanket."

In 616, Nicetas, the Governor of Alexandria, persuaded John to go with him to Constantinople to visit the Emperor. While on the way, he had a divine admonition that his reward was very near. Abandoning his journey, he went to Cyprus where he had been born, and a few days after fell asleep in Christ.

JANUARY 24

*ST. CADOC, Ab.*

(A.D. 590)

Few Saints of ancient times made a more profound and lasting impression on the Celtic people than St. Cadoc. He was the son of a king of South Wales, but preferred the holy life of the cloister to ruling over the turbulent tribes of his native land. Many beautiful stories are told of him. While he was building the great abbey church of Llan-carvan, two idle and disobedient monks refused their share of labour, saying, "Are we oxen that we should be yoked to carts and made to draw timber?" Immediately, says the legend, two splendid stags sprang from the forest, and placing themselves beneath the yoke, did the required work that the house of God might be builded.

When the church was nearly completed, Gildas, a famous worker in metal, came to visit him, bringing with him a bell of wondrous sweetness of tone. It was of copper and silver, not cast, but hammered by the skilful hands of the artisan. Cadoc greatly desired the bell for his church, but Gildas refused to give it to him, saying that he had made it for the altar of St. Peter's in Rome. But when, after some months, he came to Rome and presented his masterpiece to the Pope, it would yield no sound. Gildas knew by this sign that he should have given it to the Welsh monk, and travelling back to Britain, he hung it in the church at Llan-carvan where for many generations its sweet tones called the brethren daily to the work of prayer.

Many wise sayings of St. Cadoc's have been preserved. Here are a few of them: 'Truth is the eldest daughter of God.' 'Without light nothing is good. Without light there is no piety. Without light there is no religion. Without light there is no faith. The sight of God, that is light.'

Again he said: 'Without knowledge, no wisdom. Without knowledge, no power. Without knowledge, no freedom. Without knowledge, no honour. Without knowledge, no God.'

'The best of attitudes is humility. The best of occupations is work. The best of sentiments, pity. The best of cares, justice. The best of pains, peacemaking. The best of sorrows, contrition. The best of characters, generosity.'

When asked to define love, he said, "Love, it is heaven." "And hate?" asked his disciple. "It is hell." "And conscience?" "It is the eye of God in the soul." "The best of patriots," he said, "is he who tills the soil."

Late in life St. Cadoc settled at Weedon in Northamptonshire. The pagan Saxons were overrunning the country. One morning, as the Saint was saying Mass, a band of Saxon horsemen, driving the Christians before them, rushed into the church. Cadoc continued the Holy Sacrifice as calmly as he had begun it. The Saxon chief, urging his horse into the sanctuary, struck the Saint to the heart with his lance. As always, the thought of the martyr was for his people. "Lord," he cried, as he sank, dying, to his knees, "Invisible King, Saviour Jesus, grant me one grace, protect the Christians of my country." He suffered about the year 590.

JANUARY 25

*ST. POPPO, C.*

(A.D. 1048)

This Saint, who shares this day with St. Paul, experienced his conversion in a manner not unlike that of the great Apostle to the Gentiles.

Poppo was a knight of Flanders, and for all that he

enjoyed to the full the rough and jovial life of his profession, he was devout and pure. He made a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and on his return his marriage to a daughter of a neighbouring house was arranged. Starting out one night with a company of his retainers to fetch his bride, he was stopped on the road by a blinding flash, and his whole body seemed bathed in a glow of celestial light. It faded, and, wondering at the portent, he spurred his horse on his way. He then observed that his spear was tipped with a point of flame, and he bore it through the darkness as an acolyte might carry a tall taper in a procession in a church. Reining in his horse, he cried to his companions, "God calls me to another life."

Devoting himself to a life of charity, Poppo made a greater name for himself in the service of the poor than he had in the service of arms. There was no limit to what he would do for the help of his fellow-men in their souls and bodies. The high rank which his birth gave him in the world secured him great influence, and he did not hesitate to rebuke even the Emperor ; while his unfailing sweetness and charity endeared him to men of every station.

He was appointed Abbot of St. Vodast at Arras, and is ranked as one of the great monastic reformers of his time. He wrought his reforms, not by the strong hand of authority, but by the persuasion and sweetness of love. So gentle was his strength, and so strong his gentleness, that sinners, unable to resist him, found their happiness in a course of service to God which they knew would gratify him.

St. Poppo died, in the seventieth year of his age, in 1048. It seems that he has never been formally canonised by the Church, but such was the power of his life that the faithful everywhere waited for no action of the Church before according this holy man the honours of the altar.

JANUARY 26

*ST. POLYCARP, B.M.*

(A.D. 170)

The name of this Saint is not mentioned in Holy Scripture, but it has always been thought that he was Bishop of Smyrna at the time that St. John the Evangelist was a prisoner for the Faith on Patmos. If this was the case – and there seems no reason to doubt it – then it was to him that our Lord addressed those stirring words when He said, ‘ To the angel of the Church in Smyrna write : I know thy works and tribulation and poverty (but thou art rich), and I know the blasphemy of them that say they are Jews, and are not, but are of the synagogue of Satan. Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer ; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried ; and ye shall have tribulation ten days ; be thou faithful unto death and I will give thee a crown of life ’ (Rev. ii. 9).

St. Polycarp was converted to Christianity when a youth. He was a personal disciple of St. John’s, by whom he was consecrated Bishop of Smyrna in 96. The divine commendation of his life and work (he was the only ‘ Angel ’ of the Churches of Asia Minor for whom Christ had no word of rebuke) was given shortly after he had begun his episcopate. For seventy-four years he ruled the Church at Smyrna with a strong and loving hand. In the year 167 a fierce persecution broke out in Asia Minor. The bishop was so necessary to his Church that he was urged to leave the city, but his retreat was betrayed by a boy. When he realised the futility of flight, he went forth to meet his pursuers, saying, “ God’s will be done.” He asked only to be allowed a little time in prayer. He was brought before the proconsul on Holy Saturday while his faithful flock, amid the terrors and alarms of the persecution, were keeping the watch before the Feast of the Resurrection. As he was led

along the streets to the court, it is said that the multitude which followed him heard a loud voice from heaven crying, "Polycarp, play the man."

The proconsul, who in common with the whole city revered the aged Saint, and desired to spare him, urged him to respect his own age, and to sacrifice to the genius of the Emperor, and to deny Christ. The old man, nearing his hundredth year, replied, "Fourscore and six years have I served Him, and He never did me harm, but much good. How, then, can I blaspheme my King and Saviour?" Being threatened with fire, the Saint answered, "You threaten me with fire that burns but a short time, but are yourself ignorant of the judgment to come, and of the flame reserved for the wicked which will never be quenched."

According to the legal form the court crier proclaimed, "Polycarp has confessed himself a Christian." The heathen multitude gave a great shout and demanded that the penalty of fire be enforced. The calmest of all the vast throng was Polycarp, who loosed his girdle and laid aside his outer garments and his shoes. The faggots being piled about him, he looked towards heaven, and cried, "O Almighty Lord God, Father of Thy beloved and blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received knowledge of Thee, I bless Thee that Thou of Thy goodness hast brought me to this hour that I may receive a portion in the number of Thy martyrs, and partake of the chalice of Christ."

The fire was kindled, but refused to do its office, for, as the ancient Acts of this athlete of God narrate, 'The flames forming themselves into an arch, like the sails of a ship swelled by the wind, gently encircled the body of the martyr, which stood in the midst, like purified gold or silver, appearing bright through the flames.' To end the tragedy, a soldier drove a spear through his heart.

As the voyager enters the harbour of Smyrna, on an eminence high above the city is seen the tomb of Polycarp, where his bones rest 'more precious than the richest jewels and gold.'

JANUARY 27

*ST. JOHN CHRYSOSTOM, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 407)

This John was one of the greatest preachers of any age, and on account of his eloquence he was given the title of 'Chrysostom, the golden-mouthed.' He was born in Antioch in 347. After a brilliant career in his native city, he was consecrated Patriarch of Constantinople in 398. The Saint found the capital of the eastern world a cesspool of corruption and crime and heresy, and his untiring efforts at reform brought him into conflict with all classes, both in Church and State. His episcopate was a stormy one, and all manner of false charges were trumped up against him. Among these was the accusation that he had given the Holy Communion to persons who were not fasting. He vehemently denied the charge, saying, "If I have done this, may my name be erased from the roll of bishops." The incident shows what the primitive Church thought of fasting Communion, when an effort is made to depose a bishop on such a charge.

His bitterest enemy was the Empress Eudoxia, who finally procured his banishment. This courageous prelate feared God too devoutly to have any fear of man, and he thundered from the pulpit against the abuses of the Court, replying to the empress's intrigues to degrade him, with a powerful sermon beginning with the words, 'Again Herodias rages, again she demands the head of John the Baptist.'

He was finally expelled from his see and exiled in 404. The place of his exile was the Caucasus in Armenia. But the power of his holy influence was so great that even in exile his enemies stood in fear of him, and in the summer of 407 the order was given for him to be confined at Pityus, the



remotest fortress of the empire, at the eastern end of the Black Sea. But this transfer was only an excuse for bringing to pass his death, the sentence of which even the Emperor dared not pronounce openly. His guards were given orders to exhaust him with the violence of the journey, and they fulfilled their instructions to the letter. He was hurried on through scorching suns and drenching rains, never allowed so much as a bath, and given scarcely time for necessary food. For three months this terrible journey continued. When they reached Comana in Pontus, the old man was evidently dying, but his request that he be allowed to remain in the church was rudely denied him. His guards harried him along the road, and in a short time it was so evident that the end was near that they brought him back to Comana. He was still fasting ; and receiving Holy Communion, he cried, " Glory to God for all things. Amen." Then, says one biographer, ' He stretched out his feet which had run so beautifully for the salvation of the penitent,' and calmly expired.

JANUARY 28

*ST. CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 444)

This great Saint and defender of the Faith lived in one of the most turbulent periods of the Church's history. Raised to the patriarchate of Alexandria in 412, he found heresy and corruption on every side, and his long life was devoted to its extirpation. In 428, Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, began his career of heresy by denying that the Child born of Mary was God ; and, humanly speaking, it was St. Cyril who saved the Church from this devastating doctrine. Nestorius declared that Christ was a mere man, conceived and born in the natural way common to man,

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and that God came and dwelt in Him at a later period in His life. If this were true, there was no Incarnation of the Son of God, no Redemption, no means of grace or hope of glory in the Son of Mary, for no mere man could win these blessings for us.

Nestorius denied the truth of the old title of Mary as 'Mother of God,' while the Church has always affirmed it as a necessary part of the Faith that she was the Mother of One who, while being perfect Man, was also 'Very God of Very God, being of one substance with the Father.'

The Emperor and all the civil powers were truculently on the side of Nestorius, and those who opposed this false teaching were subject to cruel persecutions and exile. But none of these things frightened Cyril and his associates, and it was their stand, militant, unflinching and unafraid, which preserved the Faith to posterity. He went to the Council at Ephesus in 431, where Nestorius was condemned, knowing that his life might be forfeit, but he cared for none of these things, neither counted he his life dear, if by the sacrifice of it he could maintain the Faith once delivered to the Saints. He died in June 444.

In his tenth homily, the Saint salutes the Blessed Mother in a passage which sums up the Catholic doctrine for which he so nobly contended :

'Hail, O Mary, Mother of God, rich treasure of the world, inextinguishable lamp, crown of virginity, sceptre of the true doctrine, temple which cannot fail, the dwelling-place of Him whom no place can contain ; Mother and Virgin, by whom He is who cometh blessed in the Name of the Lord.'

JANUARY 29

*ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 1622)

This Saint was born near Annecy in Savoy in 1567. No sweeter or gentler spirit ever served God and his neighbour in the Church. Made Bishop of Geneva when only thirty-two years old, he spent much of his life seeking the conversion of the Calvinistic heretics. He converted many, winning them by love rather than by argument. 'He who preaches love is opposing heresy,' he said. As a practical, common-sense Saint, he has appealed to people of every class. He was one of the greatest preachers of his day, and he believed in short sermons. 'The more you say, the less people remember,' he said; 'the fewer your words, the greater their profit.'

He believed in moderation in all things. He would have neither excessive fasting nor self-indulgence. 'The spirit cannot get on with an overfed body, but if the body is underfed, it cannot get on with the spirit,' was one of his sayings.

His heart ever went out to little children and to the poor. One day when he was talking in a room which opened on a playground, he was interrupted by the noise. Noticing that the door was open, he went to close it, but came back saying, "There are so many dear little children peeping in at me so lovingly that I did not have the heart to shut the door in their faces." Asked by a devout soul how to escape distractions in prayer, he replied, with a twinkle in his eye, "I know of only one way. Die and be saved." He knew how to rebuke false humility. A bishop once wrote him, descanting on his own unworthiness for his office, fishing for a compliment. 'I am quite aware of it,' replied the Saint; 'perhaps I see it much more clearly than you do yourself.'

He went sweetly to rest on his Lord's bosom on December 28th, 1622. His last words were, "*Advesperascit et inclinata jam dies* (It is towards evening and the day is far spent)."

JANUARY 30

*ST. BATHILD, W.*

(A.D. 680)

During the reign of Dagobert, King of the Franks, Erkenwald, his major-domo, or mayor of the palace, purchased as a household slave a slender young Saxon girl who had been brought into the country from England. She had hardly reached woman's estate before he placed her in charge of his household, so wise and prudent had she proved herself. On the death of his wife, Erkenwald wanted to marry her, but she seemed so terrified at the suggestion that he gave up his suit.

She continued to serve in the household, and one day King Clovis, who had succeeded to the throne, was attracted by the graceful young English girl who was his cupbearer when he dined at Erkenwald's board. He determined to make her his queen, and, more resolute in his suit than his major-domo, he carried out his purpose amid the applause of the kingdom, so well known were her extraordinary virtues.

Tender and humble, Bathild became a nursing mother to her people. Rich and poor, noble and peasant alike, sought her in their troubles, and none went away without comfort and relief. Her position gave her great influence, which she used for the help of the Church and of the poor. Remembering the sorrows of her own youth, she worked for the liberation of the slaves, and it was through her that the law forbidding any Christian to be enslaved was enacted. She filled all France with charitable foundations for

the help of the poor and oppressed. But her care for her people, and her many public ministrations, did not cause her to neglect her duties as a mother. On the death of the king in 655 she became regent, and reared three sons, who successively wore the crown. When her eldest son, Clotaire, was old enough to take the kingdom, she obtained the wish of her heart, and retired into a convent, living as edifying a life in the cloister as she had in the royal palace.

She died in 680, and was buried amidst the lamentations of her people.

JANUARY 31

*ST. PETER NOLASCO, C.*

(A.D. 1286)

Mohammedanism is a remote thing to most of us, and we scarcely realise that only a few centuries ago it was so acute a peril that all over Europe the Christian Church was accustomed to cry in her litanies, 'From the fury of the Turk ; good Lord, deliver us.'

In the thirteenth century, Spain was in continual danger. A great part of her territory was in the hands of the Moors who harried her borders, carrying away into cruel slavery thousands of the faithful. In Barcelona a society had been organised by a company of wealthy gentlemen for the ransom of these unhappy captives, and Peter Nolasco induced the members to change their society into a military and religious Order under the name of 'The Confraternity of Mercy.' St. Peter became its first Superior, and was indefatigable in his labour of collecting money for the ransom of Christian slaves, and again and again he made perilous journeys to the cities of Granada and Valentia, and even into north Africa itself, to purchase the freedom of the Christians. He himself suffered persecution and imprisonment for the Faith. One of his disciples, an Englishman

named Serapion, while a prisoner, preached the Gospel boldly, which so enraged his captors that they tortured him, and finally gave him the honour of dying on a cross, crucified like his Blessed Lord.

The Order was greatly extended, and there is no record of how many thousands of captives its charity redeemed and restored to their families. The brethren extended their labours in later times to the Americas, and one of them, Father Soloranzo, was confessor to Christopher Columbus, and accompanied him on his memorable voyage of 1492.

St. Peter died on Christmas Day, 1286. His last thoughts were on the great work to which he had been called, and he died with the words of the Psalmist on his lips, 'The Lord hath sent redemption unto His people ; He hath commanded His covenant for ever.'

FEBRUARY I

*ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH, B.M.*

(A.D. 107)

THE life of St. Ignatius of Antioch is of supreme interest to the student of ecclesiastical history, as it binds the age of the Apostles to the Church of the second century. With two of the Apostles, Ignatius was intimately acquainted ; with John, whose convert he was, and with Peter who consecrated him to the episcopal office. It was over the Church of Antioch, which St. Peter had himself governed, that St. Ignatius was set to rule. Wisely and well he guided his flock. To him, according to Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, do we owe the custom of antiphonal singing. Having in a trance seen the angelic choirs hymning thus the praises of the Trinity, Ignatius introduced this mode of singing into his own Church, whence it spread to others.

In the year 107, the Emperor Trajan visited Antioch, and the good bishop was accused to the emperor of being a Christian. Trajan condemned the holy man to be thrown to the lions in Rome. A contingent of soldiers hurried the beloved bishop to his martyrdom. Bishops from various Churches along his way came to greet him. To their Churches, Ignatius sent letters, his wonderful Seven Epistles. From these we learn that the constitution of the Church, as we know it, was already firmly established : that is, that bishops are, by divine right, rulers of God's Church, and necessary to its existence. On the subject of the episcopate he was especially clear and strong. ' See that ye all follow the bishop even as Jesus Christ does the Father. Let no man do anything connected with the Church without the bishop.' On the celibate life, he wrote, ' If anyone is able to abide in chastity to the honour of the Lord, let him abide therein without boasting.' On the Real Presence

of Christ in the Eucharist, he said, 'The Bread of God I would have is the Flesh of Christ, and for my drink His Blood.' And again, in rebuking certain heretics, he said, 'They confess not the Eucharist to be the Flesh of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, which suffered for our sins, and which the Father, of His goodness, raised up again.'

Ignatius desired martyrdom, and implored the Roman Christians not to attempt to save him from his sentence. "I am the wheat of Christ ; I must be ground by the teeth of the lions," was his exultant cry, as he welcomed his martyrdom.

#### FEBRUARY 2

#### *THE SAINTS OF CANDLEMAS*

This is one of those days which might be called the festivals of the Divine Obedience. On this day our Saviour submitted to the law which required every firstborn boy to be presented to the Lord. Surely He who was Himself the Lord God from heaven needed no such presentation, even as He, being Very God of Very God, did not need to be brought into covenant with God through circumcision. But as He said, "I come to do the will of Him who sent me," His will was always conformed to that of the Father.

On this day He had with Him those of His Saints, who like Him had, in a matchless degree, conformed themselves to the Father's will. First of all, the Blessed Virgin who did not need to go through any purification ; for the Conception by the sinless Mother of the Child who was God, through the miraculous work of God the Holy Ghost, could bring no defilement as the law regarded it. But she, to whom God had given the highest imaginable privilege, would claim no special privilege for herself. It was through just this completeness and swiftness of her obedience in all



things that she was able to maintain herself in that perfect condition of grace in which she was conceived and born. She was not confirmed in grace in this world in such a manner that she could not have sinned. Her will was free at every moment to make whatever choice she would for good or evil, but she used this untrammelled freedom to do only those things which were pleasing to God.

The holy man who presided at the Presentation in the Temple was one in spirit with the divine Son and His holy Mother. Simeon, 'waiting for the consolation of Israel,' had received as the reward of his faithfulness the assurance that he should not see death until he had seen the Lord's Christ. St. Luke tells us that on the day upon which the Child was brought to be presented, 'he came by the Spirit into the temple.' That is to say, he felt an interior urge from the Holy Spirit to go up to the temple at this particular time to pray. It was no imperative command, but only a suggestion ; but he went just as swiftly to do what he recognised was a counsel of the Spirit as if it had been a peremptory command. He did not wait for the spur of obligation. It was the strength and joy of his life instantly to conform himself to every such intimation of the Spirit's mind. Suppose he had waited a few hours, suiting his response to some temporary convenience of his own. The Lord would have come and gone, and he would not have seen Him ; for the divine promises are given always on the condition that we do our part, by which obedient course we liberate, as it were, the divine omnipotence to work infinite blessings for and in us.

Another of the Candlemas Saints was holy Anna, who might be described as the first cloistered religious of the Gospel, who 'departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.' Her heart was wholly given to God, and to her was accorded the high privilege of being the first woman, next to the Blessed Mother, to carry the message of what God had done for

His people ; for she did not fail ' to speak of Him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.'

As the Visitation of the Blessed Mother to St. Elisabeth gave us the canticle, Magnificat, sung by the Virgin, so this day gives us the Nunc Dimittis, in which Blessed Simeon commended his soul into the hands of God, glad now to depart since his eyes had seen the divine Salvation.

This feast seems to have had its beginning in Jerusalem, where it is known to have been observed as early as the first half of the fourth century. From there it spread all over the Christian world. Various aspects of it have been emphasised in different parts of the Church. In the West it is regarded rather as a feast of our Lady, while in the East our Lord Himself is regarded as the central figure. The Greeks lay special emphasis on the meeting of our Lord with Simeon and Anna, and on the next day a festival is observed amongst them in honour of these two aged Saints. The procession of candles on this day does not appear until the eleventh century.

#### FEBRUARY 3

*ST. ANSGARIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 865)

From time to time, even in later ages, God raises up men to whom may rightly be given the name of apostles. Of this number was Ansgarius, who in the ninth century carried the Faith to the bleak regions of Scandinavia. Born not far from the city of Amiens, Ansgarius early entered the monastery of Corbey.

In time his fervour somewhat diminished ; but he was roused to new zeal when, in the year 814, news of the death of the mighty Emperor Charlemagne reminded him of the transitory nature of all things earthly. When occasion

offered, Ansgarius volunteered to go on a mission to Denmark. No pleadings of his friends could deter him from his purpose. In dreams and visions Christ spoke to him and bade him preach to the heathen tribes. Long he laboured in an inclement land. Many were the discouragements which he bravely met. Once the savage Northmen sacked and burned his church and monastery. "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the Name of the Lord," was his submissive comment.

As archbishop and primate of the north, Ansgarius laboured indefatigably, in both Denmark and Sweden. His self-denial, his love for others, made a great impression on the rude Norsemen. Even in his lifetime he was held to be a great Saint. His humility indicates that this was the case. "One miracle," he said, "I would, if worthy, ask the Lord to grant me ; that is, that by His grace, He would make of me a good man." He died in 865.

#### FEBRUARY 4

#### *ST. GILBERT OF SEMPRINGHAM, Ab.*

(A.D. 1189)

England has produced many great religious, but few religious founders. One of these was St. Gilbert, who was born at Sempringham in Lincolnshire. After receiving his education in France, he returned home, and became vicar of his old parish church. Many sought a rule of life from him, which resulted in the foundation of the Gilbertines, an order which had monasteries both for men and for women. When he died his spiritual children numbered over two thousand, seven hundred monks and about fifteen hundred nuns.

St. Gilbert was a man of a most ascetical life, and his holiness and wide charities gave him a name which was revered

throughout England. When Henry II drove St. Thomas of Canterbury into exile, Gilbert helped the oppressed prelate with shelter and gifts of money. This brought him into conflict with the king, who dared not proceed against him, however, on account of the great devotion in which the people held him.

He died in 1189, amid the tears and lamentations of a nation. His Order did not long survive him, but his holy memory lives for ever enshrined in the hearts of the faithful.

FEBRUARY 5

### *THE JAPANESE MARTYRS*

(A.D. 1588)

St. Francis Xavier founded the Church in Japan in 1549. For more than a generation Christianity flourished mightily in those islands. In 1588 persecution began, and four years later the Emperor Tagosama entered upon the work of destroying, if that were possible, the Faith in his dominions. These persecutions lasted for a full generation, and thousands laid down their lives for our Lord, amidst torments unspeakable. It was the primitive days over again. Men, delicate women, and little children were filled with a desire to suffer for Christ. They were burned at slow fires, crucified, beheaded, or suspended, head down, in pits of burning sulphur. One fresh from these torments, wrote, 'All the while my heart was so full of joy that it seemed too narrow to contain it. I have never felt any equal to it, and I thought myself at the gates of Paradise.'

The outward practice of the Faith was stamped out, and it was not to be openly taught again for nearly three hundred years. In the middle nineteenth century, missionaries were again allowed to enter the country. One day, as Mass was being said, a stranger entered and knelt beside

the priest. After a time he whispered in his ear, "My heart is with your heart." Enquiring what this strange saying meant, he found that through three cruel centuries the Christians of Japan had kept the Faith. Secretly they had, from generation to generation, baptised their own children, instructing them with all diligence in the way of the Gospel. The gates of hell had not prevailed against the Church.

FEBRUARY 6

*ST. DOROTHY, V.M.*

(A.D. 311)

St. Dorothy was a virgin who suffered martyrdom in Cappadocia in 311. On the way to execution she was met by a young man of her acquaintance who tauntingly called to her to send him some flowers and fruits from the Christian Paradise when she got there. With a sweet countenance she replied, "Thy request is granted." When she came to be executed a child was standing by with a basket of apples and roses. She asked that they be taken to the young man, with a message that she was going before to Paradise and would wait for him there. Overwhelmed by such a message, coming as it did almost from the other world, he was converted and, declaring himself a Christian, he also received the crown of martyrdom, and joined the Virgin Dorothy in the Paradise of God.

There is a church in Rome dedicated to St. Dorothy, where every year roses and apples are blessed on her feast. This Saint has been regarded as the patron of gardeners, and in some parts of Europe it is the pious custom to bless the orchards on this day.

FEBRUARY 7

*ST. ROMUALD, Ab.*  
(A.D. 1027)

St. Romuald was the son of an Italian nobleman who forced his son to act as his second in a duel which he fought with a relative in an unjust cause, and in which he slew his kinsman. Struck with horror at what had been done, the young man left home and became a hermit.

During this period of his life an incident occurred which illustrated a type of mistaken piety which does not flourish greatly in our day. He resolved to change the place of his hermitage, and when the barbarous folk amongst whom he lived heard of it they were greatly distressed. Unable to dissuade him from his purpose, a happy thought struck them. 'We will kill the holy man, and then, though we can no longer have the blessing of his presence in life, we can have that of relics when he is dead.' The Saint, being apprised of their pious intention, feigned madness, and like David of old, 'scrabbled on the doors,' upon which they took him for a fool, and concluded that he was not so holy as they had thought.

Later, he founded the Order of Camaldoli, and became the spiritual father of a multitude of spiritual sons. The members of his Order were among the apostles of Russia, and their efforts were responsible for bringing thousands of the Russian people to a knowledge of Christ. He died in his monastery of Val Castro in 1027.

FEBRUARY 8

*ST. JOHN OF MATHA, C.*

(A.D. 1213)

St. John lived in the time when the Crusades were being waged, and many Christians were suffering the hardships of imprisonment amongst the infidel Saracens. The legend is that when he celebrated his first Mass, he saw a vision of one clothed in a white garment with a blue and red cross on his breast, before whom a Christian and a Moor were kneeling in supplication. He took this as a sign that he should devote his life to ransoming the captives from their prisons. He founded the Order of Trinitarians, who devoted themselves to this good work. It is said that by the seventeenth century over thirty thousand captives amongst the Moors had been ransomed by the Trinitarians. St. John of Matha was a Frenchman by birth. He died in 1213.

FEBRUARY 9

*ST. NICEPHORUS, M.*

(A.D. 258)

In Antioch in the third century there dwelt two men, Sapphirus, a priest, and Nicephorus, a layman, between whom there had long been a bond of close friendship. But the seeds of discord were sown between them, and from being two hearts knit together as one in a great love, they became bitter enemies. After a time Nicephorus, reflecting on the grievous wound this state of affairs inflicted on our Lord's loving heart, sought a reconciliation, offering to make the fullest amend for any wrong of which he might have been guilty in the quarrel. But in spite of Nicephorus'

repeated efforts, and the strong adjurations of their friends, the priest refused to forgive him.

Shortly after this, the persecution under the Emperor Valerian began, and Sapricius was brought before the governor. Neither threats nor torture could shake his constancy, and he was condemned to die. Receiving the sentence with every manifestation of joy, his only thought seemed to be that of hastening to win his crown. On the way to execution, Nicephorus ran out to meet him, fell on his knees before him, and cried, "Martyr of Jesus Christ, forgive me mine offence." The face of the martyr, which had been alight with joy, darkened at the sight of his old-time friend, and he turned away, refusing to speak to him. Again and again Nicephorus, with tears, implored him, by the glorious confession he had just made, to speak to him a word of pardon and love, but all to no avail.

Arriving at the place of martyrdom, the executioner stood trying the edge of his sword as the martyr was being stripped. As he saw the glitter of the keen blade, his face blanched, and he fell into a tremor of fear. "Stop," he cried, "slay me not ; I will sacrifice to the gods."

Nicephorus, who stood close at hand, still pleading for the word of pardon, cried in agony of spirit, "O my brother, what doest thou ? Deny not the name of Christ ! Forfeit not the crown which thy sufferings and torture have already won for thee ! " But the holy gift of fortitude had been withdrawn from him who would not forgive his brother his trespass.

With tears of bitter sorrow for the apostate soul, Nicephorus stood forth, and cried, "I am a Christian, let me die in his stead." The work of condemnation was swift, and the faithful layman won the crown which the priest had forfeited by the hardness of his heart.



FEBRUARY 10

*ST. SCHOLASTICA, Ab.*

(A.D. 543)

This Saint was a sister of St. Benedict, the great monastic founder, and instituted the Benedictine life for nuns in a convent about five miles from Monte Cassino, the great foundation of Benedict. Once a year her brother was accustomed to visit her, and they would spend many hours together discoursing on the things of God. On one occasion, having a presentiment that she would never see him again in this world, she begged him to continue their discourse until morning. Unwilling to dispense himself from his Rule, which required the monks to spend the night always in their monastery, he refused. Scholastica, laying her joined hands upon the table at which they sat, with many tears, begged God to interpose in her behalf. Hardly had the prayer been uttered than there broke from across the mountain so fierce a storm that no one could possibly venture out of doors.

"God forgive you, my sister ; what have you done ?" he cried.

"I asked a favour of you," she responded, "and you refused me. I asked it of God and His goodness grants it."

The two Saints spent the night watches together, speaking of the felicity of the blessed ones and, with the morning, St. Benedict returned to his monastery. Two days later, engaged in prayer, he saw in a vision the soul of his sister, in form as of a dove, ascending to heaven. Filled with joy at her happy passage, he announced her death to his brethren. She was buried at Monte Cassino.

FEBRUARY 11

*ST. JONAS THE GARDENER, C.*  
(4TH CENTURY)

St. Jonas was a holy monk who for more than three score years tended the garden of the monastery at Muchon, in Egypt. One day the abbot Pachomius came on a visitation to inspect the house, and he found in the garden a fig-tree whose luscious fruit was a constant temptation to the younger brethren, and ordered it cut down. The tree was the pride of the garden, and the good Jonas held up his hands in so much grief and dismay that the abbot relented. But the following morning when the old gardener went out to tend his charge, lo, the fig-tree was withered to the roots. Then he knew how he had failed in humble obedience in protesting against the abbot's direction, and with tears of grief, he confessed his fault in the presence of the brethren.

FEBRUARY 12

*ST. MELETIUS, B.C.*  
(A.D. 381)

The history of this Saint illustrates how gentleness will often bring the erring to terms when force would fail. Meletius was a semi-Arian, the party in the Church in the fourth century which temporised with the Arian doctrine which denied the Eternal Godhead of the Son. He did not seem to be a strong character, and his gentle, peace-loving spirit led him astray. But the Christians dealt lovingly with him in their councils, and gave him time to realise the wrong turn he had taken. In 361 a council was held at Antioch, of which he was patriarch, and in the course of the

discussions, seeing the fatal trend of the Arian teaching, he arose and declared for the Catholic position unequivocally. The church rang with shouts of applause from the Catholics, and cries of wrath from the Arians. The latter were in the majority, and deposed the patriarch, and drove him into exile. He suffered many things, the hardest being that when he was allowed to return to his diocese, on the triumph of orthodoxy, he found that the Catholics, with the sympathy of the Pope of Rome, had consecrated another in his place, Paulinus by name. Meletius, always loving peace, proposed that the two should reign jointly until one of them died, but Paulinus refused the offer, and was thereupon expelled from the city.

St. Meletius died in 381, during the great council of Constantinople, over which he was presiding, St. Gregory Nazianzen delivered a eulogy upon him, remarking that his name, which meant sweetness, expressed his character.

FEBRUARY 13

*ST. MODOMNOC, B.C.*  
(6TH CENTURY)

St. David, the holy patron of Wales, gave by his life and teaching a great impulse to missionary work ; and St. Modomnoc was one of his favourite pupils. He was an Irishman by birth who had come to Wales as a youth, attracted by the fame of St. David. Little is known of him, save that he served faithfully for a number of years, tending the gardens and caring for the monastery bees. He was one of those spirits, like St. Francis six centuries later, whose sweetness and gentleness drew to him all the wild things of the forest and fields.

Impelled by the Spirit to return to his own country to preach Christ among his people, it is said that his bees

would not be left behind, but swarmed on board his little boat, and refused to be driven away. There is a tradition, which, however, cannot be verified, that he was thus responsible for the first introduction of honey into Ireland. Whatever may be the worth of this ancient story, certain it is that his memory is greatly venerated by the people of Ossory, to whose fathers so many centuries ago he brought the Word of God which they found in their hearts 'sweeter than honey and the honeycomb.'

FEBRUARY 14

*ST. BRIGIT OF IRELAND, V.*

(5TH CENTURY)

This Saint is usually commemorated on February 1st, but in some kalendars her name appears on this day. Little is known of her, but many are the beautiful and instructive stories that are told of her. One evening she sat and talked of the things of the Spirit with Dara, one of her nuns, who was blind. So sweet was their converse that the night fled away, and before they realised it the dawn had come, and the sun was gilding the east. Then Brigit sighed to think that Dara could see none of this rare beauty of the morning. So she bowed over her and prayed, and extending her hand signed the Sister's darkened eyes with the sign of the cross. Then the darkness passed from them, and Dara saw the uplifted hills, and the glory of sky, and forest, and green grass and flowers, with the light of morning lying over all. Long she looked, and then turning to the abbess, she said, "Close my eyes once more, dear mother, for when the world holds my sight the vision of God in my soul grows dim." So Brigit prayed again, and Dara's eyes once more grew dark that the Light within might shine the more.

FEBRUARY 15

*ST. SIGFRIED OF SWEDEN, B.C.*

(A.D. 1045)

While this Saint is spoken of as being of Sweden, he was, in fact, an archdeacon of York. Sweden was evangelised by St. Ansgarius in the ninth century, but the Church in that land had fallen on evil days. The succession of the ministry seems to have failed, and there were few teachers to instruct the people. King Olaf sent to King Ethelred, and asked for help. A synod of the kingdom was convened, and when the clergy seemed to hesitate about penetrating into this dark, northern land, Sigfried, then a man well stricken in years, sprang to his feet and offered himself.

On his landing in Sweden, the king, who was absent from that part of the country, sent one of his earls to make a report concerning the strangers. The earl was present at the offering of the Holy Mass, and told the king that when the missionary stood at 'the table of his religion,' he saw him raise above his head a radiant child, whose arms were extended towards him with a smile.

The king received Sigfried with great joy, and was himself baptised with his queen, and a great company of his nobles. Sigfried became the second apostle of Sweden, as St. Ansgarius had been the first, and God gave him a great harvest of souls.

FEBRUARY 16

*ST. JOHN DE BRITTO, M.*

(A.D. 1695)

In the days of Dom Pedro of Portugal, among the royal pages was a little lad named John, who was noted for his

devotion to our Lord in the midst of a gay, if not dissolute, court. An illness made him turn to the Jesuit Fathers for spiritual counsel, with the result that he joined their Order.

In spite of the powerful opposition of his family, he proceeded to India to devote himself to the conversion of the pagan people. For fourteen years he laboured without ceasing to bring them to Christ, and the result of his work was the redemption of many souls. He suffered numberless hardships and persecutions, being tortured again and again to force him to cease his efforts against the heathen practices of those among whom he worked. Finally, like St. John Baptist, he fell a victim to the false accusations of a wicked woman who had been put away by a native king at the instance of the Saint. After a long and painful imprisonment, like the great forerunner of our Lord, he was beheaded in prison. His martyrdom occurred about the year 1695.

FEBRUARY 17

*ST. FLAVIAN, B.M.*

(A.D. 449)

The post of Patriarch of Constantinople has for sixteen hundred years been one of the highest in the Church, but through very nearly all of that long period it has been an office which brought to its holder much more suffering than honour. This Saint became the patriarch of that Church in 447. It was a time of heresy and schism when men were denying the Faith and persecuting those who held it.

In 449 a council was held at Ephesus, which, owing to the violence with which the heretics, backed by the Emperor's soldiery, sought to force their doctrines on others, has always been known in history as the 'Robber Council.' Flavian refused to deny the Nicene Faith, and he was arrested and mobbed in the streets, beaten cruelly and cast

into prison. But even the most violent of his enemies dared not kill him. He was, however, sent into banishment, and treated with such barbarity that his death ensued, and hence he has always been numbered among the martyrs of the Church. No threats could stay him in contending against the enemies of the Faith, the chief of whom was Eutyches, who held that after the Incarnation our Lord did not have the two perfect natures, the human and the divine. He taught that there was a fusion of the two natures in such a manner that the divine nature practically obliterated the human, doing away with the perfect manhood of Christ. This error St. Flavian contended against with great ability and effectiveness. He died in 449, shortly after the meeting of the 'Robber Council.'

FEBRUARY 18

*ST. SIMEON OF JERUSALEM, B.M.*

(A.D. 107)

The historian, Eusebius, tells us that when St. James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem, died, the surviving Apostles elected his brother Simeon to succeed him. He was our Lord's cousin, according to the flesh.

It was during his episcopate that the judgment uttered by our Lord against Jerusalem was carried out by the Emperor Titus at the head of the Roman army. Josephus gives us an account of the siege of the city, in which all the agonies foretold by Christ were suffered, and more too. The little group of Christians, under the leadership of St. Simeon, fled to Pella, a village across the Jordan, where they remained until the war was ended, when they returned to build up the Church again amidst the ruins of the Holy City.

On their return, to their great joy, they found that the

one part of the city which had not been destroyed was along the wall where the house of John Mark stood, in which was the Upper Room, where they had so often met with our Lord, where the Holy Eucharist had been instituted, where He appeared to the eleven after His Resurrection, and where the disciples were gathered on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost came upon them. Here the little Church settled itself once more, and began to build up the walls of the heavenly Jerusalem in their hearts amid the shattered walls and palaces of the earthly Jerusalem.

But peace was not yet. The fact that St. Simeon was of the royal house of David seems to have awakened suspicion on the part of the Roman authorities, and at last the Saint was called upon to follow his Lord in the way of the Cross. He was arrested in the year 107, and, after many tortures, was crucified like his Master, at the extraordinary age of one hundred and twenty years.

FEBRUARY 19

*ST. ODRAN, M.*

(A.D. 451)

The only thing we know of this Saint is his noble end, which he reached by a holy stratagem which illustrates our Lord's saying, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Odran was a disciple of St. Patrick, and on their journeys was accustomed to run along beside the horse which drew the clumsy chariot the Saint was accustomed to use in his travels. An Irish chieftain, named Faigel, bore a bitter hate towards Christianity, and swore to slay Patrick the next time he came into his territory.

Odran heard of the threats, and one day, as they were drawing near to Faigel's castle, he said to the Saint, "Master, long have I driven for thee. For this once, I



pray thee, let me ride in the chariot, and do you run beside the horse to urge him on." The request seemed a strange one, but Patrick good-humouredly consented, and the servant took his place in the chariot while he ran beside the horse. They had gone but a little distance when evil Faigel rushed out from a place of hiding, and thinking, of course, that the man riding comfortably in the chariot was St. Patrick, he hurled his spear, transfixing the faithful disciple. This devoted servant has always been counted as a martyr in the Church's kalendar.

FEBRUARY 20

*ST. MILDRED, V.*  
(7TH CENTURY)

This Saint is one whom English Christians have ever delighted to honour. She was a grand-daughter of the heathen King Penda of Mercia, who for so many years repeatedly carried fire and slaughter through the Christian communities of the north of England. Her two uncles were treacherously slain by order of King Egbert of Kent, who repented of his crime, and settled on their sister, Domneva, Mildred's mother, a tract of land in the Isle of Thanet. She founded a convent here, sending her daughter to the abbey of Chelles in France to be educated for the cloister. The abbess of Chelles was a worldly woman, who, instead of discharging her trust, sought to marry Mildred to one of her relatives. The young Saint resisted victoriously, and on her return to England took over the government of her mother's convent, where she ruled for many years with grace and strength. Her life, after her return home, was uneventful, containing no passages that were likely to appeal to the imagination; but, after all, sheer goodness and holiness of character, in the long run, impress men more than spectacular events which are a nine-days'

wonder, and are then forgotten. More and more, as time went on, did her fellow-countrymen appreciate the simple virtues which made St. Mildred great. Her popularity even eclipsed that of St. Augustine, the apostle of the English, for until a century ago the point of rock upon which he landed when he came to evangelise England, was known, not by his name, but as St. Mildred's Rock.

FEBRUARY 21

*ST. ZACHARIAS, B.C.*

(A.D. 631)

This Saint was Patriarch of Jerusalem in the awful days of 614, when the Holy City was sacked by the Persian horde under Chosroes. It is said that the Jews in the city co-operated with the enemy, and when the walls were carried by assault, 90,000 Christians fell in the massacre which followed. There were 26,000 Jews in the Persian army, who fought in a spirit of desperation, thinking they could take Jerusalem for themselves.

The Holy Sepulchre and the splendid churches of St. Helena and Constantine were destroyed or damaged by fire. In one day of fearful sacrilege, the holy offerings made by millions of pilgrims through three hundred years were swept away, and, most terrible of all, the True Cross was seized, and carried into Persia, along with the patriarch, who was taken captive.

In 628, Chosroes was murdered by his son, who made peace with the Emperor Heraclius, and the Cross, with such captives as were still alive, was sent back to Jerusalem. Here Zacharias had the inexpressible joy of restoring that sacred Wood to its shrine. The seals of the case in which the relic was preserved were unbroken. The Saint died in 631, two years after his restoration to his see.

FEBRUARY 22

*ST. JOSEPH OF ARIMATHÆA, C.*  
(1ST CENTURY)

All four of the Evangelists tell us of St. Joseph of Arimathæa. We are told that he was a rich man, an honourable counsellor, a good man and a just. He was one who waited for the kingdom of God, so that it was not surprising that he became a disciple of our Lord, although secretly, for fear of the Jews. Strange to relate, his fear of losing respect vanished with the death of his Master, and he went in boldly unto Pilate and begged the body of Jesus. When his request was granted, he and Nicodemus took the sacred Body, wrapped in linen cloths with spices, and laid it in Joseph's own new, rock-hewn tomb, 'wherein was never man laid.' Very naturally such conduct provoked the anger of the enemies of Christ. Joseph was expelled from the council and driven into exile. According to ancient tradition, he at length reached the place now known as Glastonbury, in England. His thorn staff, which he thrust into the ground, took root and put forth leaves, and this is the origin of the Glastonbury Thorn. The asylum of St. Joseph became in time the holiest place of the ancient Britons. Here the chivalrous King Arthur was buried. The majestic ruins of the great abbey can be seen to this day.

The connection of St. Joseph with Glastonbury has often been regarded as a myth, but the latest historical investigator, J. W. Taylor, in *The Coming of the Saints*, shows, after a critical examination of the evidence, that there is much to be said for the truth of the old tradition that St. Joseph was the founder of the Faith in Britain. To deny it creates greater historical difficulties than to accept it.

FEBRUARY 23

*ST. PETER DAMIAN, B.C.*

(A.D. 1072)

Peter Damian was born in Ravenna of a good but much reduced family, in 988. He was educated by his brother who was arch-priest of that city. He joined the Benedictine community at Font-Avellano, where the strictest mode of the Religious Life was followed. The fame of his sanctity and ability went abroad, and the Church soon claimed his services in a sphere of wider importance. He was made Bishop of Ostia and a cardinal, and his great life work was the reform of the clergy, which was entrusted to him by more than one pope.

At this time, especially in north Italy, the state of the clergy was very low. Simony was common, and many of the clergy made no pretence of living lives of chastity. By his combined sweetness and sternness, St. Peter won them to better ways. His name has come down in history as one of the greatest and most successful of reformers. Among Protestants, however, it has been anathema because he insisted on men observing the vows which they, voluntarily and without compulsion, made to God – a commentary on Protestantism.

He was able to spend most of his last years in his beloved solitude at Font-Avellano, but in 1072 he was called again from his seclusion to adjust the affairs of the Church in Ravenna. On making his way back to Rome to report to the Pope, he was seized with a fatal illness at Faenza, and on the eighth day of his sickness he died while the monks of the monastery of our Lady were chanting Mattins at his bedside. Says pious old Alban Butler, ‘He passed from the employment which had been the delight of his heart on earth, to sing the same praise of God in eternal glory.’

FEBRUARY 24

*ST. MATTHIAS, Ap.*

(A.D. 64)

This Apostle is not mentioned in the Gospels. In fact, there is nothing said of him in the New Testament except what we are told in the Acts in the account of his selection to succeed Judas Iscariot in the apostolate. He is supposed on ancient authority to have been one of the Seventy who were sent out by our Lord to declare the approach of the Kingdom. It is certain, in any case, that he was a follower of our Lord from the very beginning of His ministry, for in addressing the eleven, St. Peter plainly said that 'of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of His Resurrection.' This condition having been stated, St. Matthias, and Joseph, called Bar-Sabas, or the son of Sabas, were nominated, and 'the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles.'

It is a happy commentary on his faithfulness in the obscure duties assigned him theretofore, none of which was important enough to be mentioned in the Gospels, that when an Apostle was to be chosen, he was mentioned as, without doubt, worthy of the post.

He worked in Cappadocia, and is said by the ancient authorities to have gained his crown in the year 64. He was probably crucified like his Lord.

FEBRUARY 25

*ST. WALBURGA, V.*

(A.D. 779)

St. Walburga was an English princess, being the daughter of St. Richard, the holy king of the West Saxons. She was, therefore, the sister of the German missionaries, St. Willibald and St. Winnibald, and a niece of the great St. Boniface. In early childhood she was placed in the convent at Wimborne where she served God in obscurity for twenty-seven years. But though hidden from the eyes of men, these were years of deep growth and development under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and when St. Boniface applied to the Abbess of Wimborne for nuns to assist in the work of prayer which was necessary for the conversion of Germany, Walburga was one of those who was appointed to this work.

Two years later, she was appointed abbess of Heidenheim, and so great was her sanctity and capacity for government, that on the death of her brother Winnibald in 760, she was given the superintendence of his monastery for men, according to the Anglo-Saxon custom which worked so admirably at Whitby under St. Hilda. This double charge she executed until her death which occurred in 779. Her name has come down in the Church's history as one of the great missionary women who by her prayers and instruction wrought effectively for the conversion of the German people.

FEBRUARY 26

*ST. PORPHYRIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 420)

This Saint must have been a man of rare charm of spirit. He was a Macedonian by birth, and after entering

the monastic state in Egypt, he went to Jerusalem where he lived for many years. He was a great invalid for a part of his life. On one occasion Mark the Asiatic, for years his faithful servitor, saw him painfully ascending the steps of the chapel at Calvary, and ran to help him. The old man thanked him courteously, but said, "It is not just that I who am come hither to beg pardon for my sins should be eased by anyone. Rather let me undergo some labour and inconvenience, that God, beholding it, may have compassion on me."

Some time later he was observed to be quite well, and he told this story of his healing. 'Being in extreme pain, I made shift to reach Mount Calvary, where I fainted. I seemed to come to, and saw our Lord on His Cross with the good thief hanging near Him. I said, "Lord, remember me when Thou comest in Thy Kingdom." Whereupon the Blessed One directed the thief to come to my help. He raised me from the ground, and bade me go to Christ. I ran to Him, and descending from His Cross, He delivered to me the sacred Wood, saying, "Take this into thy care." I laid the Cross on my shoulder, and carried it some way, when I awoke, and, lo, my pains were gone, and my limbs strong.' Probably it was because of this apparently miraculous happening that, shortly afterwards, the Patriarch of Jerusalem appointed him to the honoured post of Custodian of the True Cross which at that time was still preserved in Jerusalem.

In 396 he was said to have had another vision of our Lord who said to him, "Give up the treasure of the Cross which is in your custody, for I will marry you to a wife, poor indeed and despised, but of great virtue. See that thou adorn her well, for contemptible as she may seem, she is my sister." While Porphyrius was casting in his mind what manner of vision this might be, messengers came to announce that he had been chosen Bishop of Gaza. The Church of Christ in that despised little town was henceforth to be his Bride.

With many tears, he bade farewell to the Holy Places of Jerusalem where so long he had prayed and served. In Gaza, in the face of much pagan opposition and persecution, he did a most apostolic work, and the Bride which Christ had committed to him he adorned until she became beautiful and glorious even in the sight of uncomprehending men.

St. Porphyrius rested from his labours in 420, but his works do follow him. Mark the Asiatic, who wrote his biography, concludes it with the tender words, 'He is now in the Paradise of delight, interceding for us with all the Saints, by whose prayers may God have mercy on us.'

FEBRUARY 27

*ST. LEANDER, C.*  
(A.D. 596)

This Saint was a Spaniard who, while not reckoned in the Church's kalendar as a martyr, suffered many things at the hands of the Arians, who might be called the first Unitarians. They accepted Christ as the Saviour of the world, but held that He was only the first of God's creatures.

The Arian Visigoths were reigning in Spain in the sixth century, and the patience with which St. Leander endured the contradiction of sinners awakened the conscience of the king, and the result was the conversion of the Visigothic nation to the Catholic Faith.

It was about this time that the Spanish Council of Toledo put into the Nicene Creed the words, 'and the Son,' describing the Holy Spirit as proceeding not only from the Father, but also from the second Person of the Trinity. This was their way of declaring the Son as being God equally with the Father. St. Leander died about the year 596, happy in the knowledge that the nation which had so



long persecuted those who followed the truth, had been brought to a knowledge and acceptance of the Nicene Faith.

FEBRUARY 28

*ST. PROTERIUS, M.*

(A.D. 557)

Alexandria was a great nursery of Saints, perhaps just because it was a great cesspool of sinners, for 'the Saints are the sinners who kept on trying.' Proterius was consecrated patriarch in 552, against the violent opposition of a faction which was inclined to the Eutychean heresy. The old persecutions had long since ceased, but there was no peace in his time. His Eutychean enemies held, quite contrary to the Church's teaching, that our Lord's nature was a strange commingling of the human and divine. The Church's doctrine was that our Lord was 'perfect God and perfect man,' both the divine and human natures existing in Him, whole and entire, and without any confusion.

His enemies set up one Elurus as the patriarch, but such were his excesses that the imperial commandant of the city drove him into exile. His adherents, however, fomented a revolt, forced St. Proterius to take sanctuary in the baptistery of the church of St. Quirinus, and on Good Friday, 557, the schismatical rabble broke into the holy place, and stabbed him to death. He has ever been regarded as a martyr for the Faith.

FEBRUARY 29

*ST. OSWALD, B.C.*

(A.D. 992)

This Saint, owing to the date of his death, is given a festival only once in four years. Doubtless, in his place of

heavenly peace, his humility is well pleased at thus being set aside. He was educated in France where he took the Benedictine habit, and where he remained until he heard of the fatal illness of his uncle, St. Odo, Archbishop of Canterbury. He arrived too late to pay his duty to his uncle, and decided to remain in England. St. Dunstan, who succeeded Odo, shortly after had him appointed Bishop of Worcester, where he worked many happy reforms, and was greatly venerated.

Later, he was made Archbishop of York, without, however, giving up the see of Worcester. He seemed to prefer the latter church as a place of residence, and it was when he was there that the summons to his reward came. It was his custom, amongst other pious practices, to wash the feet of twelve poor men daily. On February 29th, 992, he performed this duty as usual with great care and devotion. As he wiped the feet of the last one, and bent forward to kiss them, he suddenly cried, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and stretching himself on the ground, gently expired. He was buried in the cathedral of Worcester, but his body was translated to York ten years later.

## MARCH I

### *ST. DAVID, Ab.*

(A.D. 544)

FOURTEEN hundred years have passed since St. David died, and yet through the vicissitudes of so many centuries his name and memory have remained dear to the Welsh nation. Even in our own time, his feast is observed with rejoicing in Wales, where the day is regarded as the great national festival, and pilgrims from all over Britain year by year are going in throngs to pay their devotions at his shrine. Since the Welsh Church won its independence of the State, the devotion to the Saint has greatly increased. On our first acquaintance with the Saint, we find him leading the life of a hermit in the vale of Ewies, where now stands Llanthony Abbey. Later, he moved to the site of the present cathedral of St. David, where he built a monastery. This was to be his permanent home. Disciples gathered about him and to them he was a real father.

It was no idle life which his monks lived. They worked hard with their own hands in the fields ; they harnessed themselves to the plough instead of using oxen for that purpose ; they tended bees, that they might have honey to give to the sick and poor. David's merits attracting attention, he was elevated to the episcopate, and became eventually the primate of the old Cambrian Church. An old chronicler tells us, ' In his times the Church of God flourished exceedingly, and ripened with much fruit every day.' On the first day of March, in the year 544, the holy man passed out of this life, mourned as the spiritual father of the Welsh nation. It is said that at the hour of his death, St. Kentigern in Scotland saw his soul borne up to heaven by a cohort of angels.

MARCH 2

*ST. SIMPLICIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 483)

St. Simplicius was Pope of Rome in one of the most terrible ages of the world's history. In his time the Western Empire came to an end. Italy was overrun by the barbarians, and the fairest land in Europe had been ravaged until it had become a desert, well-nigh without inhabitants. Fire and slaughter had exhausted the world, and men sat stunned and numbed in spirit, waiting for what seemed to them the end of all things. The Faith seemed to be in eclipse, if such a thing were possible. There was not one Christian king in Christendom. Arianism had swept over the Empire, followed by Monophysitism, an equally dangerous heresy which denied the perfect manhood of Christ by contending that the Divinity at the Incarnation had absorbed the humanity. Even the bishops on their thrones, who should have been the shepherds of the sheep of God, were, in numberless cases, ravening wolves, preying upon the flock.

During these awful days, Simplicius gave himself by day and night to the care of the sick and suffering, comforting the afflicted, and keeping alive in the hearts of the faithful that flame of hope which alone enabled them to endure the terrors of the times. His love and care were their only comfort, and so deeply were their hearts impressed by his goodness that his memory has never grown dim in the Church. He won the confidence and respect of the barbarian invaders, and did much to sow in their hearts the seed of the Catholic truth. He was in continual conflict with the East where the authorities in both Church and State were deeply infected with the heresies of the times, and his steadfast course kept the torch of truth alight when

often it seemed that it must be quenched. His consecrated labours came to an end in 483.

MARCH 3

*ST. ÆLRED, Ab.*

(A.D. 1166)

This Saint was one of the greatest spiritual masters the English Church ever produced. He was of a noble family, and was brought up in the rude Court of the King of Scotland. In his youth, desiring the Religious Life, he gave up his hopes of great worldly position, and became a Cistercian monk at Rievaulx. His ability and holiness of life soon raised him to high position in his Order, and he became the head of all the Cistercians in England.

His work was of a purely spiritual character, and history tells many stories of his loving care for those whom God had entrusted to his pastoral oversight. On one occasion a young monk, growing weary of the life at the monastery, determined to leave. Unable to dissuade him from his course, the abbot betook himself to prayer while the young man set out to go to the nearest city. Night coming on, he was soon lost in the woods, and wandering for many hours, he at last saw a light, and hastened towards it, thinking that some peasant might give him shelter for the night. On drawing near, however, he saw that in his wandering he had come back to the monastery where the holy abbot was so earnestly praying that God would bring the prodigal home again. Overwhelmed at this evident design on the part of God for his return to his duty, he fell at the feet of Ælred, and asked for pardon. The abbot received him as a son, and restored him to his place, where he lived a long and exemplary life.

St. Ælred died in 1166, and although he never did any great thing as the standards of the world would count it,

his simple holiness has made his name a venerable one in the annals of the Church. It has been said of him that 'his sole ambition consisted in loving and being loved.'

MARCH 4

*ST. OWEN, C.*  
(7TH CENTURY)

This Saint is known chiefly from his connection with St. Chad. He is said to have held a high post in the household of Queen Etheldreda, but feeling his summons to a life of devotion, he made his way to the monastery of St. Chad at Lavingham. He came not empty handed, but with a kit of tools, in the use of which he was much skilled, ready to make his contribution of hard work amongst the brethren. And so, while the others sang the praises of God, Owen was employed in humble, menial tasks, as occasion demanded.

One day, when working in the monastery close, his brethren having gone to the church, and the abbot being in an oratory adjoining the house, St. Owen was startled by an unwonted sound of music. Following it, it led him to the oratory, and he heard harmonies so rich and sweet that he could not fancy them having any other source than the celestial choirs. Awed at the sound, he returned to his work, but the music increased until all the cloister was vibrant with it. It then seemed to ascend above the oratory roof until it was lost in the heavens.

Mentioning it to some of the brethren, he was amazed that they had heard nothing of it, for to him it seemed to fill the whole monastery with its glorious cadences. Believing surely that it was of some unearthly origin, he went to the abbot, and told him of what had happened. Then St. Chad, perceiving that God had not kept the secret from

this humble servitor, confided to him that he had seen a vision of angels who warned him that in seven days they would return, and take him with them. And so it came to pass that, after a seven-night, St. Chad went to his rest.

MARCH 5

*ST. VIRGILIUS, Ab.*

(A.D. 618)

St. Virgilius was Archbishop of Arles in southern Gaul early in the seventh century. He had the distinction of being a son of Lerins, the famous island monastery which gave so many glorious spirits to the Church through several centuries. His legend tells us that when he was Abbot of Lerins he was wont to make the rounds of the monastery at night, like a good shepherd keeping watch over his flock. One night he looked out over the sea, and was surprised to see close by the shore a strange-looking ship, with a throng of sailors on the deck who beckoned to him with their hands. Drawing nearer to see this unusual thing, two of the seamen came down from the ship, and approaching him, said, "Reverend Father, we know who thou art, and the fame of thy sanctity has come to us. Many in far off lands desire to see thee, and to hear thy words of holy wisdom. We are pilgrims who have taken ship for Jerusalem, and we would have thee come with us that men might know thee, and give thee thy meet praise."

Virgilius looked long at them ; and then he said, "Think ye to deceive an old soldier of Christ ?" and his right arm swept through the air as he made a great sign of the Cross. Instantly the men vanished, and, spars and masts toppling in ruin, the sea yawned and swallowed up the hell-ship. And as the Saint gazed across the waters he saw only the sheen of the friendly stars, and thanked God for his deliverance from the tempter.

MARCH 6

*SS. PERPETUA AND FELICITAS, MM.*

(A.D. 203)

These Saints suffered in Carthage in the persecution of the Emperor Severus, in the year 203. Their martyrdom was a demonstration of the truth of the saying that in Christ there is neither bond nor free. Perpetua was a young matron of a family of social distinction, who had but lately given birth to her first child, her age being twenty-two ; while Felicitas was her slave-maid whose baby had been born when she was in prison awaiting the end. They had not yet been baptised, but were under instruction for that Sacrament when they were arrested.

Their friends used every persuasion to induce them to make the slight concession of casting the grain of incense on the idol's shrine, but to no effect. The greatest trial Perpetua had to endure was when her aged father, a man of high character, and always to her a tender guardian, came to her in the prison and implored her ' by the love she bore her mother, by her reverence for his grey hairs, and, above all, by her maternal compassion for her little child who could not live without her, to renounce her Faith.' She burst into tears at his entreaties, but her faith did not fail.

They were condemned on their refusal to sacrifice to the gods, and were ordered to be thrown to the beasts to make a holiday for the people. They were tossed by a wild cow, but not killed. Perpetua rose and modestly arranged her dress ; and then seeing her little slave near her, unable to rise, went to her and lifted her up. The sight moved the hard hearts of the mob in the amphitheatre, which cried out savagely that it was enough. They were led out and delivered to the young gladiators to be slain. These youths were those who were in training for the gladiatorial games,



and as yet had little skill with their weapons. Perpetua fell into the hands of a blundering boy whose lack of skill prolonged her agony. Felicitas preceded her mistress into Paradise, but only a few minutes separated them, and mistress and slave were safe at last in the blessed enjoyment of what St. Augustine, in a happy combination of their names, spoke of as 'Perpetual Felicity.'

MARCH 7

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS, C.D.

(A.D. 1274)

Without question, this Saint was the greatest systematic theologian the Church has ever produced in any age. He was not, however, a man who was so devoted to his books that he could think of nothing else. He was at the same time a great Saint, and the Church owes him as much devotionally as she does theologically.

He was sent as a boy to the Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino to be educated, but later he became a Dominican friar, entering that Order when he was sixteen years old. It is said that one day when yet a boy, with tears of earnestness in his eyes, he asked one of his teachers, "*Quid est Deus?* (What is God?)," and his splendid intellect was ever consecrated to the work of seeking an answer to this question.

His learning and wisdom were prodigious, but he never studied without prayer. When the festival of Corpus Christi was instituted, he was appointed to draw up the service for the feast, and for it he wrote those wonderful hymns, 'O Saving Victim,' and 'Therefore we before Him bending,' which from their Latin titles are commonly known as the *O Salutaris Hostia*, and the *Tantum Ergo*. He was also the author of the beautiful collect for that feast

which we use so much in devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, 'O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament of the altar hast left us a memorial of Thy Passion, grant us so to venerate the sacred Mysteries of Thy Body and Blood, that we may ever perceive within ourselves the fruit of Thy Redemption.'

It is narrated that in his later years St. Thomas had a vision in which God said to him, "Thomas, thou hast written well of Me. What desirest thou as a reward?" The Saint replied in a sentence which has become almost a proverb amongst devout souls, "*Domine, non nisi Te* (Lord, nothing except Thyself)." God Himself, as with Abraham of old, was his 'exceeding great reward.'

His great work, which for devotion and learning has never been equalled in the Church's literature, is the *Summa Theologiæ*. Since its publication, it has been universally taken as the basis of all study of the Faith of the Church. It is said that the late Archbishop Temple, of Canterbury, read this ponderous work through no less than three times in the early days of his ministry. The *Summa* was left unfinished. In his later years the Saint became so absorbed in the contemplation of divine things that he found it difficult to commit anything to writing. While celebrating Mass in the chapel of St. Nicholas at Naples he was vouchsafed some unusual manifestation of God of which he would never speak. When his friend, Rainald, urged him to finish the work, he replied, "I cannot, for everything I have written appears to me worthless when compared with what I have seen and with what has been revealed to me."

In January 1274, the Saint set out for Lyons to attend the Church council which had been convened by Pope Gregory X, in the hope of healing the breach between the Eastern and Western Churches. He was taken ill in the Campagna, and stopped at the Benedictine monastery of Fossa Nuova. He seemed to recall with great joy his boyhood days amongst the holy Benedictines at Monte Cassino, and now he had come back to the sons of St. Benedict to die.

To the abbot he said, "This is the place where I shall find repose." To Rainald, "This shall be my rest for ever ; here will I dwell, for I have a delight therein." He died on March 7th, in the full prime of his manhood, being scarcely forty-eight years old. His last words, as he received the viaticum, were, "Thou art the King of glory, O Christ : Thou art the Everlasting Son of the Father."

MARCH 8

*ST. JOHN OF GOD, C.*

(A.D. 1550)

This Saint was a shepherd, like so many other holy servants of the Good Shepherd. He had many experiences of life which in one way or another fitted him for the work which God had for him to do in the end. He ran away from his home when a lad, and served in the wars against the Turks. He was full forty years old when, struck with remorse at the thought of his wasted life, he went to North Africa and devoted himself to the work of ransoming the Christian slaves who had been captured by the Moors. Returning to Spain, he devoted himself to helping the sick and the outcast.

One night, the story goes, he found a poor man in the streets, starved, ill, and near to death. He took him in his arms to a shelter, and fetched water to wash his feet, when, as he tenderly wiped them with the towel, he was amazed to see that the feet of the beggar were pierced with the marks of nails, radiant with an unearthly brightness. Raising his eyes in awe, he heard a voice which said, "John, all that thou has done for the poor in My Name, thou has done unto Me." And with these words the vision vanished.

St. John devoted his life to a heroic ministry to all who needed his care, and at last he laid it down for another.

In 1550, he plunged into the River Xinel to save a child from drowning. The exposure brought on an illness which ended in death. He went to his reward at the age of fifty-five. 'Greater love hath no man than this.'

MARCH 9

*ST. FRANCES OF ROME, W.*

(A.D. 1440)

The period during which this Saint lived was one of the darkest of all the Christian ages. Italy, and especially the city of Rome, was a prey to a hundred contending factions. Those who should have been the spiritual shepherds of the flock lorded it over God's heritage, and everywhere the heavy hand of the judgments of God could be traced. An old biographer has said of St. Frances that 'she rose as a star in a dark night.'

When she was twenty-six years old, the Neapolitan armies under Ladislas captured Rome, and it is said that never in all her history had the Eternal City known such surpassing atrocities as accompanied her fall and sack. The Saint's husband had to fly to a distant province, her family palace was pillaged and almost destroyed, and her eldest son dragged away in chains as a hostage. The sack of the city was followed by a fearful famine to which succeeded a pestilence which swept away its thousands.

With her own heavy load of grief on her heart, this valiant woman thrust herself into the battle with hunger, plague and death. Her leadership dispelled the despairing apathy which had fallen upon many. Private charities were organised ; hospitals were opened for the perishing multitudes ; food, medicines and nurses were secured ; nor did she stay her hand, or cease with her noble example to inflame the zeal of others, until the peril had exhausted itself.

Her own burdens in the meantime had increased. Her husband returned home a broken man, soon to die, and two of her little children were claimed by the death-hand of the plague. But still her thought was for others, and when her husband was no more, she determined to consecrate all that was left to her, together with her rich fund of experience in helping the poor, to God in the Religious Life. She had some years before founded a community known as the Congregation of the Oblates of Mary, and she now entered this house, not as the founder, assuming a place of authority, but as a humble suppliant for the habit, asking the lowest place. But her request was not granted. Her Sisters would have no one to rule over them save their Mother. For four years she guided their life of devotion, and their works of love. Then came her time of rest in the Paradise of God. She died on March 9th, 1440.

MARCH 10

*THE FORTY MARTYRS*

(A.D. 320)

In 320 there was, under the Emperor Lucinius, a great persecution in Armenia. In one of the legions stationed at Sabaste were found forty soldiers who refused to sacrifice to the gods. It was a bitter winter, and the inhuman judge condemned them to be exposed naked on the ice of a neighbouring lake, while to tempt them, there were prepared on the shore a glowing fire and a warm bath.

The martyrs went joyfully to their happy doom, and standing together in the fearful cold, they chanted the continual prayer, "Forty warriors went out to fight : may forty warriors wear the crown." One by one, overcome by the cold, they fell unconscious upon the ice. At length, one of their number, terrified at the prospect of death, fled to the warmth of the fire, and made his submission to the

heathen faith. Shocked at the apostasy of their companion, they prayed the more earnestly, "Forty warriors went out to fight : may forty warriors wear the crown." Among the guards who had been sent to carry out the sentence of the court, was a pagan soldier, who when he saw the joyful constancy of the martyrs, had his heart touched by the Holy Spirit, and throwing aside his cloak, joined them, declaring himself a Christian and ready to die for Christ.

When the sun arose, upon the frozen bosom of the lake lay the bodies of forty athletes of God, their souls rapt to heaven. Their prayer was answered : forty warriors had gone out to fight the fight of faith, and forty warriors were crowned as martyrs in the Kingdom of their Lord.

#### MARCH 11

#### *ST. CONSTANTINE, M.*

(A.D. 576)

St. Constantine is regarded by many as being the first Christian martyr of Scotland, although this is doubted by some authorities. This Saint is said to have been a king in Cornwall, who, after the death of his wife, resigned his crown and, going into Ireland, entered a monastery, and was set to grinding corn in the barn, which occupation he persevered in for seven years. One day, one of the brothers, who was in the barn unknown to Constantine, heard him laugh softly to himself, and say, "Is this then King Constantine of Cornwall, who wore helmet and shield, who drudges thus at a hand-mill? It is the same, and it is not the same." And he laughed softly to himself again, as though he thought he had played an amusing practical joke on King Constantine.

The brother slipped away unseen, and reported to the abbot what he had heard. On being charged with his identity he owned to being the king. He was some time

afterwards ordained to the priesthood, and crossing over into Scotland, shared the labours of St. Columba. He was made abbot, probably of Glasgow, and about the year 575 he went on a mission to certain pagans among whom he lost his life.

It is said that among the ancient Picts who inhabited Scotland the persons of all religious teachers were held to be sacred, regardless of what they taught, which accounts for the fewness of martyrs amongst the early Scottish missionaries.

MARCH 12

*ST. GREGORY, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 604)

This truly great pontiff of the sixth century should always be held in the highest esteem by all English-speaking people. It was he who first sent missionaries to bring our heathen ancestors from darkness into light. Well says the Venerable Bede, 'If Gregory be not to others an apostle, he is one to us, for the seal of his apostleship are we in the Lord.' Gregory was the scion of one of the proudest families of old Rome. The son of a senator, he was himself, while yet a young man, appointed praetor of the city ; but in the midst of the splendour in which he lived, he heard the Voice of God calling him to give up all. Gregory was not disobedient to the call, but disposing of his wealth, he transformed his palace into a monastery, where he, with other devout souls, rigorously observed the Rule of St. Benedict.

The beautiful story of his meeting with the English captives, and of his desire to go as a missionary to their native land, is always worth re-telling. Seeing in the marketplace one day some fair-haired English slave-boys, he asked after their race. "They are Angles," he was told. "*Non Angli sed angeli* (Not Angles but angels)," he exclaimed.

“And what is their province?” he pursued. “They are from Deira,” was the reply. “*De ira*, indeed,” he said, “and it is from the wrath of God that they shall be delivered.”

God had other work for His servant, for in the year 590, in spite of his earnest desire to avoid the honour, Gregory was made Pope of Rome, and seven years later he sent St. Augustine, with forty monks as companions and fellow-workers, to tell our Saxon forefathers the story of Christ. His success and the honours heaped upon him in no wise led him into pride. So real and deep was his humility that he delighted to subscribe himself ‘Servant of the servants of God,’ and it was he who, when the Patriarch Eulogius of Alexandria (September 13th) addressed him as the ‘Universal Bishop,’ repudiated the title. “Away with those words which inflate vanity and wound charity,” he replied.

### MARCH 13

#### *BLESSED AGNELLUS, C.*

(A.D. 1236)

St. Francis of Assisi was a man of great missionary spirit, and when he founded his Order, he sought to extend its benefits to all the world. In 1224 Blessed Agnellus was sent by him to England to found the Friars Minor there. He erected the first English Franciscan house at Oxford, where the brothers lived in great simplicity, refusing all endowments and depending entirely upon charity for their support. On one occasion the Saint went into the school connected with the monastery, where the great Franciscan scholar, Robert Grossetête, was lecturing, and heard the students discussing the evidence for the existence of God. “Alas, brethren,” he exclaimed, “while the simple are entering into heaven, the foolish wisely dispute whether there is a God.” Blessed Agnellus died in 1236.



MARCH 14

*ST. MATHILDA, Q.*

(A.D. 968)-

St. Mathilda came of royal blood, and as a young girl was married by her parents to Henry the Fowler, who had divorced his first wife and who afterwards sat upon the imperial throne of Germany. He credited the success of his arms, and of his reign, to the prayers of his saintly empress.

On Henry's death, Otho, Mathilda's eldest son, succeeded him. The young emperor had a will of his own, and it was not always a good will. He was impatient of his mother's goodness, and found her presence an awkward restraint upon the licentiousness of the Court. He stripped her of her lands, and ordered her to retire from the Court. Her favourite son, Henry of Bavaria, aided and abetted his brother in his unnatural conduct. War broke out between the emperor and Thankmar, his half-brother, in which the latter was slain, and, a little later, the two brothers who had conspired against their saintly mother were at war.

All this civil strife bore grievously on the country, and especially on the poor peasantry, but their suffering was the Saint's opportunity, and she devoted herself and all her fortune to the relief of their misery.

Poor Mathilda reaped a harvest of woe from what has been called the involuntary fault of her youth in marrying a divorced man - involuntary, for in these iron times the tastes or wishes of young girls were not consulted when it came to their espousals. After a time, worn out with sorrow, she retired into the convent at Nordhausen, where she spent her closing years in prayer and penance. She died on this day in the year 968. Her last words were, "Where shall we place our hope save in our God? Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all else will be added unto you."

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MARCH 15

*ST. ZACHARIAS, B.C.*

(A.D. 752)

This Saint was a Greek by birth and education. He went to Rome where he was ordained to the priesthood at a time when all Italy lay in terror before the advance of the barbarian Lombards. Zacharias was elected pope at a most critical moment, and with heroic resolution he determined to give his life, if needful, for the safety of his people. He addressed a letter to Luitprand, the Lombard king, which, while full of dignity and courage, had in it so much of the grace and sweetness of humility that the rude monarch was completely won. He received the pope at Terni, in Umbria, effected a favourable treaty with him, released his prisoners, gave up the towns he had taken belonging to the Holy See, and even attended with great edification the consecration of a bishop on the morrow.

St. Zacharias' combined strength and sweetness, and his swift readiness to sacrifice himself, even to the point of life itself, on behalf of his people, secured for him a name which all good men have delighted to honour. He died on March 3rd, 752, and his festival is kept on the day of his burial in St. Peter's.

MARCH 16

*ST. ENDA, Ab.*

(A.D. 542)

Enda was an Irishman, and the eldest son of King Conall of Oriel. On succeeding to the rule of his tribe, he was inflamed with a love of worldly glory, and a desire for deeds of military prowess. His sister, Fanchea, the

abbess of a convent in his realm, lost no opportunity of seeking to draw him to a love of heavenly glory instead. Her continual effort was to show him what true and lasting glory was, according to God's servant of old who said : ' If your delight be then in thrones and sceptres, O ye kings of the people, honour Wisdom that ye may reign for evermore.' The sight of the dead body of a young girl brought to him a sudden realisation of the vanity of the course he was pursuing, and abdicating his high place, he gave himself to the service of the Kingdom of God. His brother-in-law Engus, King of Munster, gave him the island of Arran, and here he built up a seat of learning and holiness which for several centuries was famous through Europe as a nursery of the Church. Here he died about the year 542.

The historian Froude was not able to find many good words for the life of Catholic sanctity and self-sacrifice, but of Arran he wrote, ' It is strewn over with the ruins, which may still be seen, of the old hermitages ; and, at their best, they could have been but such places as sheep would huddle under in a storm, and shiver in the cold and wet, which would pierce through the chinks of the walls. Yes, there on that wet soil, with that dripping roof above them, was the chosen home of these poor men. Through winter frost, through rain and storm, through summer sunshine, generation after generation of them, there they lived, and prayed, and at last lay down and died.'

MARCH 17

*ST. PATRICK, B.C.*

(A.D. 465)

St. Patrick was born in Britain late in the fourth century, and died about the year 465, although the exact date is not known. He was educated in France, and was sent

by St. Germain of Auxerre to evangelise Ireland. It has been given to few missionaries to see such wonderful results of their preaching as St. Patrick saw in the years of his work. He found Ireland a savage land of heathenism, and when he died there was no place where the faith of Christ had not been accepted, and paganism was dead. Thither he was taken when a lad, by slave dealers, who stole him from his home across the sea. The hardships of slavery and exile caused the youth to turn wholeheartedly to God. After six years, God delivered Patrick in a miraculous manner, and he was able to return to his home. However, God meant him to return to the land of his exile, not as a slave, but as bishop and missionary. In a dream, Patrick heard the cry of many voices from the dark Irish forests, entreating him to come and enlighten them. After many years of careful preparation, he was consecrated bishop early in the year 432, and immediately set out for the field of his labour. God gave him success from the first. The unfailing courage of the man must have exerted a powerful attraction over the Irish. Patrick went to keep Easter of the year 433, at Tara, the chief city of all Ireland, at the very time when a great pagan religious festival was to be celebrated. One detail of the ceremony was that no light was to be kindled until the flame arose from the great festal pyre in the court of the palace at Tara. What was the horror, then, of the pagans to see, as night fell on Easter Eve, a great pillar of fire reddening the sky over Slane Hill, twelve miles away. In mingled rage and terror the heathen king drove in headlong haste to Slane, but the lofty courage and sweetness of the Saint so won him that, while he did not become a Christian, he gave Patrick freedom to preach the Gospel in his dominions. Many of the chiefs and nobles were converted and the common people heard him gladly.

The story of St. Patrick driving the snakes out of Ireland is a variant of one which is told of many Saints. The island

of Malta claims to have been purged of all its snakes when St. Paul shook the viper off into the fire, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles ; and the same thing is said to have been done for the isle of Lerins by St. Honoratus.

MARCH 18

*ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM, B.C.*  
(A.D. 386)

This Saint presided over the Church in Jerusalem at the time when the infamous apostate emperor, Julian, boasted that he would prove false the words of our Lord when He said that the Temple stones should not remain one upon another, by rebuilding the Temple for the worship of the Jews. The people of Jerusalem were outraged by this blasphemy, but Cyril was unmoved. "No stone of this evil work shall be laid," he said. And when the workmen were gathered to begin the foundations, strange portents of nature were shown which so terrified the masons that they fled from the place and refused to work, despite the threats of the Apostate. Postponing the work, the emperor entered upon a war against the Persians, in the course of which he was seized with a deadly illness. His last words are said to have been, "Galilean, Thou hast conquered." St. Cyril was one of the great teachers of the ancient Church, and his instructions on the Faith, under the name of *Catechetical Lectures*, still remain as among the great authoritative works of the Church's interpretation of the Faith.

St. Cyril was Bishop of Jerusalem about a generation after St. Helena discovered the True Cross on the site of Calvary. He was a great apostle of the Blessed Sacrament. He wrote, 'Since Christ Himself has declared, "This is My Body," who shall dare to doubt any more ! And when He asserts, "This is My Blood," who shall ever

hesitate, and say this is not His Blood? What appears to be bread is not bread, though perceived by taste, but is the Body of Christ; and what appears to be wine is not wine, though the taste says so, but the Blood of Christ.' St. Cyril was born in 315, and died on March 18th, 386.

### MARCH 19

#### *ST. JOSEPH, C.* (1ST CENTURY)

Nothing is known of the foster-father of our Lord save what can be drawn from the slender narratives in the Gospels. There are certain apocryphal writings, some of them fairly early in date, which give many alleged facts. In the middle ages they were very popular, and are drawn upon by the artists for subjects of pictures depicting the life of the Saint. They are, however, without any authority.

Considering that he was nearer to our Lord than anyone else, the Holy Mother alone excepted, it is strange that for many centuries little or no honour was paid to him in the Church's services. The Coptic Christians seem to have been the first to accord him a feast, commemorating him on July 20th. This feast may have been observed as early as the fourth century. The Greeks also honoured him on December 25th or 26th. His name appears in certain local Western martyrologies in the ninth century, and the first church dedicated in his honour was in Bologna in 1129. But this devotion was private, not official. Towards the end of the fourteenth century we find him definitely named in the Franciscan and Dominican kalendars, and through the influence of the friars his cultus spread through the West. Not until the pontificate of Sixtus IV (1471-84) did he have a feast assigned him in the Roman kalendar. His feast was for several centuries one of extremely moderate

rank, but in 1621 it was made obligatory to observe it. Nor did his name find place in the Litany of the Saints until it was placed there by Pope Benedict XIII in 1726.

This failure to honour St. Joseph in the early Church may have risen from the fact that many of the early heresies had much to do with the circumstances of the Incarnation, and had our Lord's foster-father been brought prominently forward, it might have given colour to the shocking heresy, frequently advanced, that He was the son of this Saint.

MARCH 20

*ST. CUTHBERT, B.C.*

(A.D. 687)

One night by Tweed water in the vale of Lauderdale, a young shepherd watched his flocks, mingling his vigilance with much prayer. Suddenly across the star-strewn heavens there shot a brilliant meteor, and the startled youth saw that its shining track did not fade, but increased in splendour until it passed beyond his vision into the far spaces of the heavens. The next day a traveller announced to the countryside that St. Aidan, the holy Bishop of Lindisfarne, had gone forth on his final passage. The portent was a sign to young Cuthbert, and, leaving all, he sought the cloistered life at Melrose Abbey which was a branch house of Lindisfarne, where the novices were trained.

Soon his consecrated zeal marked him as a great Saint and Gospel messenger. No village was so distant, no mountain glen so savage, as to escape his ministration. Time would fail us to tell of his incessant labours, teaching and preaching, giving the Sacraments, comforting those in trouble, and attending on the sick and dying.

But the activities of this ministry could not wholly satisfy his thirst for God. He had been prior of Lindisfarne for

twelve years when he retired to the little island of Farne within sight of the monastery, for a life of prayer. But this did not mean that he cut himself off from men. Innumerable 'pilgrims of sorrow' found their way to his island sanctuary, and such was his power of sympathy, that no one went away carrying the burden he had brought with him.

One day the Saint saw approaching across the sea a fleet of boats more splendid than he was used to seeing. As he gazed in wonder, not unmixed with apprehension, up from the narrow beach came a stately company, and all humbly the King of the Northumbrians knelt, and with tears and pleading, begged him to take the care of the great diocese of Lindisfarne. It was a moving sight – a proud king and a humble hermit-monk, mingling their tears together, the one urging the Saint to come to the help of the Church, the other passionately protesting his unworthiness.

Such a contest could have but one ending. Cuthbert left his solitude. No prince-bishop was he, dwelling in a stately palace among the great ones of the land, but once more his swift and tireless feet sped over mountain and fen to bring the message of consolation to God's scattered sheep.

After two years of unceasing toil he came back to his beloved Farne to die. It was the night of March 20th, 687. Near the landing-place was a rude shelter where the monks who were ministering to the dying Saint spent the night in prayer. When word came that their father was no more, it was the hour of the Night Office, and they were chanting the sixtieth Psalm.

It had been arranged that the lighting of two torches on the shore should be the signal to the brethren on Lindisfarne that the Saint was dead. These were now waved aloft in the darkness, and as the red gleam struck upon the water, the watcher on the beach hastened to tell the news to the community. They were in the church for Mattins, and, by a coincidence, they were chanting the same psalm,



“ O God, Thou hast cast us out and scattered us abroad ; Thou hast also been displeased ; O turn Thee unto us again.”

But there was hope at the end, and a shout of victory, for their spirits were lightened as they sang the concluding words, “ O be Thou our help in trouble, for vain is the help of man. Through God will we do great acts, for it is He that shall tread down our enemies.”

Ever since that sad but triumphal night on Farne, the sixtieth Psalm has been called ‘ St. Cuthbert’s Dirge.’

### MARCH 21

#### *ST. BENEDICT, Ab.*

(A.D. 543)

St. Benedict is called the patriarch of Western monasticism. There were, however, many monks before his day, but he, through his Holy Rule, gave form and stability to the Religious Life in the West, such as it had never had before. He was born in Umbria in Italy in 480. When St. Benedict was born, the outlook in Europe was exceedingly dark. All the West was in the hands of barbarians, barbarians for the most part either heathen or heretic. God designed Benedict to be the means of saving civilisation, and of bringing whole nations to the Catholic Faith. Early the Spirit of God began to work in His chosen servant. When only fourteen years old, Benedict fled to the savage solitude of the Sabine hills, leaving behind him fortune, family and the pleasures of the world. For three years he lived in a dark cave, ‘ alone with God alone.’ The light which shone in that darkness, however, could not be hid. Both at Subiaco, his first retreat, and later at Monte Cassino, many chosen souls came to place themselves under Benedict’s gentle guidance. Clergy and laymen, Romans

and Goths, victor and vanquished, alike flocked to become citizens of his monastic republic. Small wonder that his disciples so loved him, since in his Holy Rule, St. Benedict thus pictures to us his ideal of an abbot – ‘He must be merciful, ever preferring mercy to justice. Even in his corrections, let him act with prudence. Let him remember that the bruised reed must not be broken, let him strive rather to be loved than feared.’

When Totila, the King of the Goths, was ravaging Italy in 542, he sent one of his generals to St. Benedict, dressed in the royal robes, to see if Benedict could detect the imposture, which the Saint promptly did. Totila was so impressed with his holiness that he took counsel with him concerning his life, and, through the Saint’s influence, changed his mode of warfare to a standard of humanity rarely seen in that iron age. St. Benedict died in 543.

#### MARCH 22

#### *ST. BASIL OF ANCYRA, M.*

(A.D. 363)

The early years of the fourth century saw the last of the persecutions of the Christians in the Roman Empire. But there remained the brief, sad reign of Julian the Apostate, who assumed the imperial purple in 360. He reinstated paganism, and went through the foul ceremony of plunging into a vast bath of bull’s blood to wash off the ‘stain’ of his baptism; and held his hands in the hot entrails of fresh-slain beasts to remove the baptismal anointing. He dared not persecute the Church generally, but by both craft and cruelty he sought to lead the faithful into the paths of his own apostasy.

St. Basil was a priest in Ancyra who worked so faithfully and with such success to animate the Christians to stand

firm, that he was brought before the tribunal on the charge of sedition. He was tortured to death, crying in his last hour, "Christ is my light, and Jesus is my hope, a calm port in tempest. I give Thee thanks, Lord of my fathers, because Thou hast saved my soul from the abyss. Keep Thy Name inviolate in me." This occurred about the year 363.

## MARCH 23

ST. FINGAR, M.  
(A.D. 450)

When St. Patrick had been in Ireland for nearly twenty years he preached in Munster, and baptised many souls. Just after the season of baptism, Coroticus, a prince-pirate from Britain, landed on the coast with a party of his savage followers, plundered the district, and carried off as captives into slavery a large number of these newly made Christians.

One of the few authentic writings of St. Patrick's still extant is a letter to Coroticus on this occasion, remonstrating with him, and urging him to return the captives, many of whom, he said, had been ravished from their homes, both young men and virgins, 'with the fragrance of the anointing fresh upon their brows.'

History does not relate what effect, if any, this letter had, and the incident is swallowed up in obscurity, but St. Fingar is said to have been one of these captives. The records give no hint of his fate, but the ancient Celtic Church commemorated him as a martyr. There is a church dedicated to him at Lok-Eguignar in Brittany. Guigher was another name of this Saint.

His name was widely known, and a story entitled *The Life and Martyrdom of St. Fingar* was written long afterwards by one Anselm – not the theologian-Saint of Canterbury –

which, if we are careful to regard it as fiction, makes rather stirring and edifying reading. According to this story, he was, as a matter of course, the son of an Irish King (most of the early Irish Saints were), who went to Brittany to escape the wrath of his father who was a pagan. Anselm was a charming romancer, and includes not a few delightful bits in his *Life*. Fingar returned to Ireland and, gathering a company of Christians, set out for Cornwall. Hija, an Irish virgin, wished to go with them, but was left behind. The old Celtic Saints were continually passing to and fro between Ireland and Cornwall and Brittany. Their ordinary method of transportation was to sit on an altar-stone while the complaisant breezes wafted them to the desired port. Being a woman, of course, St. Hija had no altar-stone, and, in any case, that would have been rather a heavy craft for a delicate virgin to manage, but a friendly gust of wind having cast the leaf of a tree into the water, she mounted upon it, and was borne so swiftly over the sea that she was able to be on the shore to greet Fingar and his companions when they arrived. The little port of Hayle, named after St. Hija, is said to have been their destination.

These stories have such a charm about them that one could wish they were true, but truth compels us relegate them to the realm of religious fiction.

MARCH 24

*ST. HILDELITHA, Ab*  
(ABOUT 720)

This Saint should be a special patroni of all Anglican Sisterhoods, for she is said to have been one of the first virgins of the English nation to consecrate herself as a spouse to our Lord. She was trained in France, and when St. Erkenwald founded the monastery for himself at Chertsey, he also

founded a convent for his sister, Ethelburga, at Barking in Essex, and sending for St. Hildelitha, placed it under her discipline.

Little is known of the events of this Saint's life, but her character and holiness are sufficiently vouched for by the monastic literature of the time. The Venerable Bede speaks of her in one of his letters, relating the great things he had heard of her ; and when St. Aldhelm wrote his poetical treatise on Virginitv, it was to St. Hildelitha that he addressed it.

MARCH 25

*THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN  
MARY*

This is the Feast of the Incarnation of God, the Eternal Son. It is, therefore, the commemoration of the greatest event that ever occurred in human history, for on this day, in the womb of His holy Mother, 'The Word was made Flesh.' On this day, the Eternal Son, 'God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God,' assumed our human nature, and took it up into the Godhead. Never in history had such a stupendous event occurred ; never again, however long the world may endure, can so ineffable an event find place.

The story of the Incarnation is told simply and beautifully in St. Luke's Gospel. The central figure in it is God the Son ; and next to Him in dignity and grace stands His holy Mother Mary. The angel we are told came in to her with his Salutation, "Hail, thou that art highly favoured ; the Lord is with thee ; blessed art thou among women." He then went on to announce to her that she was to enjoy that loftiest privilege, which for generations every Jewish woman had thought of with a trembling hope in her heart — namely that she was to be the Mother of the Messiah. The

Blessed Virgin's reply – "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" was meaningless unless we accept the Church's teaching that she understood the word of the angel to mean that she was, even in that moment, to conceive in her pure womb Him whom, as St. Augustine tells us, she had long before conceived in her heart.

The angel, in response to her question, undertook to explain, as far as so infinite a Mystery could be explained, in what manner this was to come to pass; "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

This was plainly to say that through the miraculous power of the Holy Ghost, Blessed Mary was to conceive and bring forth a Son without the interposition of a human father, and that this Son was to be the Lord Jehovah come in the Flesh.

But God forces the will of no one, and He was not to force her will. He waited, and all heaven, we may say, waited as on tiptoe for the word of consent from a little Galilean maid which would make possible the Incarnation of the Eternal Son. How far the young Virgin of Nazareth grasped the significance of this tremendous thing, we have no way of knowing; but she threw herself upon God, yielding her will in perfect trust to Him: 'Behold, the handmaid of the Lord: be it unto me according to Thy word'; 'and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.'

These are the events that are commemorated on this glorious feast, events in which the divine condescension crowned a lowly virgin with an honour above all else that even God Himself could bestow upon her; events which set in motion the immediate work which was to redeem humanity, and reconcile it to God.

MARCH 26

*ST. LUDGER, C.*

(A.D. 809)

This Saint was the apostle of Saxony. He was born in what is now Holland about 743. He went to England as a young man and was educated under the famous Alcuin at York. He returned to his native country in 773, and was active in the work of converting the pagans throughout all north Germany. He was a profound student of the Scriptures and spent much time in prayer.

On one occasion the Emperor Charlemagne sent for him to attend upon him. The Saint happened at the moment to be at his prayers. He sent word to the emperor that he would come as soon as he had finished his devotions. Impatient at the delay, the prince sent three separate messengers to hasten him, but Ludger quietly bade them wait. The emperor was in a great fume by the time he arrived, and demanded to know how he dared keep him waiting. The Saint replied with great humility that he had the profoundest respect for the emperor, but that the King of Heaven was above all, and that it did not befit him to interrupt his audience with God in order to attend upon an earthly monarch. The courtiers stood aghast at such boldness, but the generous emperor, embracing him, humbly acknowledged that the Saint had taught him a lesson which it were well that all kings should learn. St. Ludger died on Passion Sunday in 809.

MARCH 27

*ST. JOHN OF EGYPT, Ab.*

(A.D. 593)

St. John was a carpenter who until he was twenty-five years old, followed his craft at his birthplace, Lycopolis, the modern Siout, in Egypt. Desiring a life of perfection, he applied to a hermit to be trained for the Kingdom of Heaven. The old man told him that the first lesson to be learned was that of obedience, and in order to teach him, set for him many strange tasks. "Put your staff in the ground, and water it until it sprouts," he commanded him. John carried water every day for a year the distance of two miles, and watered the dry staff assiduously, without an apparent thought of disobedience. Then the hermit bade him stop. Having taught him this lesson, he admitted him to the routine of his own life, and on the death of his master, John spent several years in visiting various monasteries in the East, and then settled down to the eremetical life. His sanctity made him the counsellor of many souls, including the highest dignitaries in Church and State. The Emperor Theodosius the Great tried to induce him to leave his hermitage, being prepared to do him great honour, but the honours of the world offered no lure to John. He did not withdraw himself from men, and received them graciously when they came to seek spiritual counsel, but he had little patience with those who came to try him with hard questions, or to satisfy their curiosity, although his words were always gentle and his spirit full of tenderness. Palladius went to see him, and criticised him because he made him wait while he talked with the governor of the province who had come at the same time. "It is not the whole, but those who are sick who need the physician," said the Saint humbly. "This man is immersed in the business



of his post, while you are always engaged in seeking your salvation. He has scarcely an hour to spare for his soul. Which should I prefer and greet most readily?" With these gentle words he put his critic to shame. St. John died about 593.

MARCH 28

*ST. DOSITHEUS, C.*

(ABOUT A.D. 550)

This Saint as a boy was squire to a Roman army officer. He had grown up quite ignorant of the truths of religion, but when, through a visit to Jerusalem, he learned of Christ, he threw himself into His service with a flaming zeal. He became a monk under St. Serides, who at first was inclined to reject him because of his fine clothes and generally elegant bearing. "But I will give the boy a chance," he said, and taking him into the monastery, he proceeded by all manner of spiritual exercises to bring his soul to perfection. One day, the old man heard Dositheus talking loudly in the refectory. Calling him to him, he said, "Fetch me a bottle of wine." It was brought and presented to the master. "Oh, no, my son," he said, "this is not for me; it is for you. It is the way of the rollicking Goths to drink and shout. I heard your clamour, and I thought that a bottle of wine was all that was needed to make you a complete Goth."

"Father," said Dositheus one day, "see how neatly I have made the beds in the infirmary." "Humph!" answered the father, "you may be a pretty good bed-maker, but you are not much of a monk, or you would not brag about it."

On one occasion, Dositheus showed some annoyance when he was asked to give up the use of a knife to which he had become attached. "Alas," cried his master, "you have given up all your wealth, and all hope of the worldly

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position which you had the right to expect, and, after that, you fret because you cannot have a miserable little knife." In all these things the young Saint maintained a spirit of humility, rejoicing that he was thus given ample opportunity to master the lessons of Him who said, "Learn of Me, for I am meek and lowly in heart."

About five years after he had come to the monastery, he fell ill of consumption, and his life on earth drew to an end. Amidst his suffering he was a model of patience. He sought to keep up his devotions to the end, but one day he said to the kindly old abbot, "Father, I can do no more." Then the old man said, "Go in peace, my son, and stand before the Holy Trinity, and pray for us." Ever obedient, the young Saint folded his hands upon his breast, and gave up his soul to God.

MARCH 29

*ST. JONAS, C.*

(A.D. 327)

While the Church in the Roman Empire under Constantine the Great was resting from the scourge of persecution, far to the east in Persia a multitude of martyrs were winning their crowns. King Sapor was the author of this persecution, so glorious in the annals of the kingdom of heaven. St. Jonas, when the troubles began, deliberately exposed himself to peril by openly ministering to the martyrs, and encouraging them to hold fast. He was speedily arrested, and the accounts of the tortures which he endured are well nigh incredible. Having spent a long day on the rack, the next morning one of his jailors said to him, "You must have passed last night very uncomfortably." "Since the day I came into the world I remember no night more sweet and agreeable," he replied, "for I was marvellously refreshed by the remembrance of Christ's sufferings for me."

MARCH 30

ST. JOHN CLIMACUS, Ab.

(A.D. 605)

This Saint was so named from his having been the author of a famous treatise known as *The Climax or Ladder of Religious Perfection* which, written fourteen hundred years ago, still holds its place as one of the great spiritual classics of the Church. A man of wide learning, he renounced all the advantages which the world offered him, and became a monk. Realising the dangers of intellectual pride, he sought by every means to conquer the tendencies that naturally become exaggerated amongst scholars. 'By silence he curbed the insolent itch of talking about everything,' is quaint old Alban Butler's way of describing one of the Saint's virtues. He never contradicted or disputed with anyone, and so sweet was his spirit that he won the hearts of all.

He lived for many years in a little hermitage on Mount Sinai, just below the great monastery of St. Katharine. But such a burning and shining light could not be hid under a bushel. Men flocked to him from all quarters, and at the age of seventy he was chosen Abbot of Mount Sinai, and the Superior General of all the monks and hermits in the neighbourhood.

He had, as might have been expected, some strange characters under his rule. One monk spent twelve years, shut up in his cell, 'almost continuously weeping on the perpetual meditation of death,' and when he came to die all his brethren could draw from him was the repetition of the remark, "He who hath death always before his eyes will never sin" – a true saying, perhaps, but an unwholesome principle upon which to base a life. The service of God consists of a great deal more than merely not sinning.

St. John's life was very different from this, for he was an apostle of the joy of service, as his great work on Christian Perfection shows. He died in 605, at the age of eighty.

MARCH 31

*BLESSED ALCUIN, C.*

(A.D. 804)

Alcuin has been called 'the intellectual prime minister of the Emperor Charlemagne. The Saint was supposed to have been the most learned man, and the best administrative educator in Europe in his day, and yet he was content to live as a simple monk in charge of a small diocesan school at York. But others were not content, and when in the year 781, the Emperor Charlemagne planned to organise an educational system in the Empire, especially for the training of the clergy, he called Alcuin to become its head. This might rightly be called the first real university system that was organised in the western world.

Alcuin did a great work, but both he and his imperial patron were far ahead of their age, and, unhappily, under his unworthy successors, who thought of little save their own personal and political gains, the great system of education they had organised fell to pieces.

When he was about sixty years old, desiring to retire from the Court, he was appointed abbot of the abbey of St. Martin at Tours, but after some time, humble soul that he was, he asked to be allowed to take his place in the ranks, living under obedience along with the rest of his brethren. And thus, in the year 804, died the greatest scholar of his age, whose wisdom had qualified him to be the counsellor of popes, councils, and kings.

APRIL 1

*ST. HUGH OF GRENOBLE, B.C.*

(A.D. 1132)

IN Dauphiné, on a lofty height that stands above Château Neuf, may be seen the ruins of a castle called the Castle of St. Hugh. Here in the eleventh century was born the great Hugh of Grenoble. His father was a devout nobleman named Odillo, and the piety which Hugh saw in his father and mother aroused at an early age in the heart of the boy a desire for the service of God. While holding a prebendal stall in the cathedral, he was informed that he had been chosen Bishop of Grenoble. He was only twenty-seven years old, and was all for declining it peremptorily, but the papal legate insisted, not only on his accepting the election, but also on his going with him to Rome to receive consecration there, as Varmond, the Archbishop of Vienne, who was his metropolitan, had received his promotion by bribery, and Hugh declined, in any case, to be consecrated by him.

St. Hugh found his diocese in a lamentable state, owing to the general corruption of Church life. With unsparing labour, mingled with great consideration and tenderness, backed by his own holy example, he succeeded in raising the tone of his diocese in a marked degree.

One night, after he had been bishop for about five years, he dreamed that he saw, shining above the snow-clad peaks of Grenoble, seven white stars which seemed to glorify with their radiance all the adjacent country. Long he wondered what could be the meaning of the dream. Then St. Bruno with six companions came to him and asked to be allowed to have some retired spot where they could live a simple hermit life to the glory of God. He directed them to a wild solitude, and there they founded the Grande Chartreuse,

whose sons for eight centuries have shone in the darkness of the world like the stars of heaven.

For a long time St. Hugh desired greatly to give up his responsibilities and retire to a life of prayer. Once indeed he did go to a monastery of the Cluny Order, but the Pope on hearing of it sent him peremptory orders to return to his see. With many tears, he bade farewell to the peace of the cloister and resolutely plunged once more into the turmoil of his diocesan life.

He died on April 1st, 1132, at the age of eighty years, of which fifty-two had been spent in incessant toil to shepherd the sheep of his divine Master.

#### APRIL 2

#### *ST. FRANCIS OF PAULA, Ab.*

(A.D. 1508)

At the age of fifteen, St. Francis became a hermit in Calabria in southern Italy. In time, the fame of his holiness attracted others, who placed themselves under his direction, and he founded the Order known as the 'Minims,' in his humility using the word to indicate that it was the least of the Religious Orders.

The story is told that King Ferdinand of Naples, who was notorious for oppressing his people, taking money from even the poorest of them in order to satisfy his wicked and luxurious tastes, offered the Saint a rich gift for his Order. Francis boldly refused to touch it, and when the king indignantly demanded to know why, the Saint took up one of the coins and held it before the eyes of the royal sinner, and behold, it was dripping with the blood of the widows and orphans whom he had oppressed.

Louis XI of France was a contemporary of St. Francis, and the fame of the Saint was at its height when that evil

monarch realised that he was about to pay for his many excesses with the price of his life. Terrified at the thought of death, he sought to induce Francis to come to Paris, and restore him miraculously. The Saint would not listen to the messengers, until the Pope commanded him to go with them. The king implored him to obtain from God the prolongation of his life, offering him at the same time a rich present. Francis refused the present and would undertake to do nothing save to prepare Louis for the end, the thought of which filled him with so much terror. Louis, imagining all men to be as base as himself, supposed that the Saint had not been sufficiently bribed, and redoubled his gifts. Francis swept them aside, and in language such as the proud king had never heard before, required him to make ready for the judgment which was soon to come. If Louis died with any penitence in his soul, it was the result of the stern but loving – indeed, stern because loving – ministrations of this Saint.

St. Francis never returned to his beloved Italy. Louis' successors kept him near to them, desiring to profit by his wisdom and his prayers. This had the advantage of enabling him to build up his Order in France, where several houses of the Minims were founded during his lifetime. On Palm Sunday, 1508, Francis felt his death-sickness coming on. Calling his brethren together, he gave them his last counsels, and on Good Friday as the solemn Office of the Passion of his Master was being chanted in the monastery church, like his Master he yielded up his spirit into his Father's hands. He was ninety-one years of age. Seventy-six years of his fruitful life had been spent in the heroic exercises of Holy Religion.

APRIL 3

*ST. JOSEPH OF THE STUDIUM, C.*

(A.D. 883)

St. Joseph was a Sicilian by birth, but when the Mohammedan hordes overran his country he migrated to Thessalonica, where he entered the Religious Life. He lived in Constantinople for several years. During this period, while on a short sea voyage, he was taken prisoner by Moslem pirates, and for several years was a slave in the island of Crete. It was certain death for any Christian to attempt to lead a Moslem away from his religion, and any Moslem renouncing his faith was put to death without mercy. These facts might have acted as powerful deterrents from any work of evangelisation, but St. Joseph cared for none of these things if he could by any means lead souls to Christ. Secretly indeed, but with great resolution, he declared Christ to the infidels among whom he lived, with the result that many converts were made to the Faith.

Having made his escape from captivity, he went to Rome and devoted his pen for many years to the propagation of the Christian religion. He was, perhaps, the most prolific of the ancient hymnographers of the Church. He wrote many long poems in praise of God and His Saints, which are especially valued in the Eastern Church. Their literary style is not that which, on the whole, appeals to the Western mind, but here and there, amidst much that is tedious and turgid, is found a nugget of gold. John Mason Neale made his work known to Anglicans through his facile translations. His hymns which are best known to us are, 'O happy band of pilgrims,' and 'Stars of the morning, so gloriously bright.'

He died in Rome about 883. Although in high favour with several popes, he has had little honour done to him in the West. It is to the Orthodox Church we must go to find him accorded his true measure of praise.



APRIL 4

*ST. ISIDORE OF SEVILLE, C.*

(A.D. 636)

St. Isidore was born in Spain about 570. As a boy at school he, like St. Augustine, who tells us of it himself, and like many another boy since his day, had a hard time with his Greek. He determined to settle the matter by running away from home. Stopping at a roadside spring to rest, he noticed that the drops of water seeping through the rock had worn deep the hard heart of the stone. Ever a thoughtful boy, it came to him that if the water could so wear away the rock, constant application to study could surely conquer even tough Greek roots. He returned to school, and the lesson of these drops of water gave to Spain a historian, and to the Church one of her most powerful defenders of the Faith. He became Bishop of Seville, and is generally said to be the author of the famous Mozarabic Liturgy.

He died on April 4th, 636, and has ever been venerated as a holy Saint by the universal Church. Dante, in his great poem the 'Paradiso,' represents St. Isidore amongst the Doctors of the Church as in the 'Heaven of the sun,' and says,

See farther onward flames the burning breath  
Of Isidore.

APRIL 5

*ST. JULIANA, V.Ab.*

(A.D. 1258)

The Church owes the festival of Corpus Christi to the devotion of this holy Belgian abbess.

She was born at Retinne, near Liège. At the tender age of six she lost both her parents, and was sent for her upbringing to the convent of Cornillon, where she was placed under a Sister Sapientia. This good Sister disciplined the child one day because she had fasted without permission, and then sent her off to a priest to confess her fault. The priest seemed to have had a fund both of common sense and humour. He heard her confession, and said, "Now, my dear, for your penance just run back to Sister Sapientia and tell her to boil you an egg without delay, for you are going to eat it at once."

From her infancy, St. Juliana was thrilled with the glorious drama of the Christian year as it was unfolded in the various seasons and festivals. But she noted with grief that no great day was dedicated in honour of the Blessed Sacrament, and she instituted certain devotions to It in her convent at Cornillon near Liège. She further interested the bishop in the subject, although there was great opposition among certain neighbouring monks, who, after the thorough manner of their time, went so far as to create riots in which her convent was pillaged, and she had to flee for her life.

But her faith and devotion prevailed, and if the visitor to Liège will climb the steep hill of St. Martin to the noble church that crowns it (if it was not destroyed in the Great War), he will look with profound emotion at the extreme western chapel in the right aisle. It was there in 1247 that the feast of Corpus Christi was first celebrated in the Christian world. It was merely a local feast, but so deeply did it impress all who took part in it that it spread throughout the Church until in 1264 it received the authorisation of the Pope, and St. Thomas Aquinas wrote for it the beautiful office, with its unrivalled hymns, which we use now on the feast, which falls on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. St. Juliana died in 1258.

APRIL 6

*BLESSED NOTKER, C.*

(A.D. 912)

This Saint was a Swiss, and early in life became a monk in the great monastery of St. Gall. His memory is dear to us because he was the author of the great sequence which has been employed in the Burial Office : ' In the midst of life we are in death : of whom may we seek for succour but of Thee, O Lord.' He wrote this beautiful composition one day after he had been watching the workers engaged on a bridge which was being thrown across the vast chasm of the Martin-stobel, and saw their peril as the workers were suspended above the yawning depth.

Many stories are told of him to illustrate his rare combination of wit and holiness. A chaplain of the Emperor Charles the Fat, being jealous of him, thought to humiliate him in the royal presence, and said to him, " Thou art a profound theologian ; tell us what Almighty God is doing at this moment." Notker replied, " Almighty God is doing what He has done all through the ages, and will do as long as the world lasts : He is putting down the proud and exalting the humble and meek."

Charles was a great friend of the monastery, and frequently came to visit it, and Notker did not hesitate to teach the royal guest lessons of humility of his own devising. Having sent a courtier one day to the Saint with the request that he send him some word of spiritual counsel, the messenger found him weeding and watering the garden. He somewhat abruptly said, " Tell the emperor to do what I am doing now." The courtier was indignant and wanted the emperor to order him to be punished for his impertinence. But Charles had far more spiritual insight than history has credited him with. He replied, " Yes, that

is the sum of all : pluck out the weeds of vice, and water the herbs of grace."

Notker died in 912, and his memory has always been one of the precious treasures of his famous monastery.

APRIL 7

*ST. APHRAATES, C.*

(ABOUT 390)

This Saint was a Persian, and is said to have belonged to the hereditary intellectual aristocracy of that country, being a Magian. On being converted, like Abraham of old he went out from his country and his kindred to seek a land which he believed God would show him. Finding a solitary place near Edessa, he entered upon the life of a hermit, but after a time he determined to go to Antioch to assist there in the life-and-death struggle that was going on between Arianism and Christianity. The Saint had learned a little Greek, and in his rude jargon, half Greek, half Persian, he laboured to build up the Faith.

The Emperor Valens supported the Arians powerfully and came to Antioch thinking that his presence would overawe the Catholics. Perhaps some were affected by the presence of imperial majesty, but not so this old hermit. He had too much of the reverent fear of God in his heart to leave room for any fear of man, even though that man wore a crown.

One day the emperor met the Saint going to an oratory he had built in a quiet place by the riverside. "Whither away so fast?" asked Valens. "Sire," he said, "I go to pray for the world, and especially for your empire."

"How is it," said Valens, "that those professing a hermit's life are mingling in the affairs of men?"

"If I were a virgin, living in retirement in my bower,

and my father's house caught fire, would you counsel me to sit still and be burnt, or to seek to put it out ? ”

“ Why, to put it out, of course,” said the emperor.

“ My Father's house is on fire ; it is being consumed with heresy, and I rush forth from my retirement to help extinguish the blaze. Fare thee well.” Having thus delivered himself, he turned his back on the imperial heretic and sped away on his errand of prayer.

The Prefect of Antioch, noticing the old man's poverty and how tattered his robe was, offered him another, quite a fine one. “ Sir,” he said, “ I have a dear old friend who has been faithful to me for many years. Would you have me cast him off ? ” “ Certainly not,” said the prefect. “ Then,” said the Saint with great courtesy, “ Will your Excellency excuse me if I stick to my old coat ? ”

The Saint lived to see the death of Valens, after which peace was restored to the Church. About the year 390 he departed this life to possess God, ‘ with whom,’ says Theodoret, his biographer, ‘ I believe he has now greater power than when he was on earth : on which account I pray also that I might obtain his intercession.’ The whole Church has followed the pious example of his biographer. In the East he is commemorated on January 29th.

APRIL 8

*ST. ALBERT OF JERUSALEM, M.*

(A.D. 1214)

This Saint was an Augustinian friar and a native of Parma. The Church in his day had an effective way of securing the services of her sons. The bishopric of Vercelli falling vacant, ‘ that city,’ remarks pious old Alban Butler, ‘ had the happiness to carry him off and see him, by compulsion, placed in the episcopal chair.’ For twenty years

he ceased not by his humility and sanctity to raise to a degree of spiritual splendour the see which he adorned.

In 1204 the Latin patriarchate of Jerusalem was vacant, and the people, hearing of his great sanctity, clamoured for him as their spiritual ruler. The holy man obeyed the call readily, because, Palestine being in the hands of the Saracens, there was every prospect that so earnest a spirit would soon meet with a glorious martyrdom. But such was the force and attractiveness of his sanctity that even the Moslems learned in a brief time to love and venerate him.

He resided for the greater part of his patriarchate at Acon, and the crown for which he longed was not withheld from him. On Holy Cross Day, 1214, a tragedy occurred which shook every heart that loved the Church. As the procession of the Holy Cross was taking place and the holy patriarch was passing by, clad in his sacred vestments, with a relic of the True Cross in his hands, an impious wretch whom he had had occasion to rebuke sprang from the crowd and stabbed him to death.

APRIL 9

*ST. MARY OF EGYPT, Penitent*  
(5TH CENTURY)

One day the Abbot Zosimus, journeying deep into the Jordanic wilderness, was surprised to see a figure, apparently naked, fleeing before him. Judging it to be some anchorite, he ran after him, and when about to overtake him was astonished to hear this strange person cry out, "Holy father, I am a woman. Throw me your mantle to cover me that you may come near me." Doing as he was desired, he then heard the strangest story of penitence that, perhaps, has ever fallen from human lips.

She told him that her name was Mary, and that she was

an Egyptian by birth. Falling into evil ways in her youth, she became a common woman of the streets. Going with a party of pilgrims to Jerusalem to find new opportunities for vice, three times she essayed to enter the church of the Holy Sepulchre at the time the True Cross was being displayed for the veneration of the pilgrims, but each time an invisible hand held her back. Terrified at this strange manifestation, the realisation of the evil of her life came over her, and crying out in agony, she begged the Blessed Mother of Christ to succour her. Seeking again to enter, her feet quickly bore her into the church, where, falling on her face, with such joy as she had never before known, she venerated the sacred relic. At the same time a voice seemed to speak to her, saying, "If thou wilt go beyond the Jordan, thou shalt find comfort and peace."

Leaving the city, she penetrated into the wilderness, and for forty-seven years had served God in that solitude, never having seen the face of man, and living only on what sustenance the wilderness provided. For seventeen years the tyranny of her old passions contended against her spirit, but, by the help of God and the prayers of the Saints, she fought against them. Then came calm and peace.

Such was the amazing story of Mary of Egypt, as she told it to the abbot. Falling on his knees, Zosimus cried, "O my spiritual mother, dead to the world, thou art raised nigh to God by thy holy charity. I adjure thee by the love of our Saviour, give me thy blessing."

The woman replied, "May the Lord who careth for us, body and soul, be praised for ever and ever." And Zosimus cried, "Amen."

She then begged him to come to her on Maundy Thursday and bring her the Holy Sacrament. This he did, and when she had received the Lord's Body, lifting up her eyes and hands to heaven, she cried, "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation."

When again the abbot went to her to give her the Lord's Body, she came not, and then by the banks of the sacred river he found her, wrapped in an old mantle, dead. She had heard in her youth the voice crying, "Pass over Jordan, and thou shalt find peace." She had now passed over the river of death, and the peace that passeth all understanding was hers.

APRIL 10

*ST. BADEMUS, M.*

(A.D. 376)

Few of us think of Persia as being historically associated with Christianity, but following upon the apostolic preaching (it is possible that the Apostle St. Thomas brought the Gospel to Persia) in the first centuries of the Church, this country, now almost destitute of any vestige of Christianity, gave a glorious army of martyrs to the Church. Bademus was a rich and noble citizen of that kingdom, who, under King Sapor in 376, gave up all that he had, even to his life, for the Name of Christ. He was for many months imprisoned in a noisome dungeon, and tortured without mercy, but never once did his constancy fail. At last he won the crown of martyrdom with so serene and sweet a spirit that his executioner, unnerved by the sight of his courage, was unable to strike the blow. Four blundering strokes were necessary to sever his head from his body, and in this added suffering the blessed martyr rejoiced, since it gave him a greater share in the sufferings of his Lord.



APRIL 11

*ST. LEO, B.C.D.*  
(A.D. 461)

Frequently, in reading the lives of saintly bishops, we learn that through humility they sought to evade the responsibility of the episcopate. Not so St. Leo, who, though not lacking in humility, felt that 'He who imposed the burden would give His aid for the administration of it.' Once Pope of Rome, Leo devoted himself to the duties of his office, and manifold were those duties.

Leo was compelled to take a prominent part in the political life of his day, and yet he found time for the composition of those magnificent theological treatises which have won him a place among the Doctors of the Church. His powerful defence of the Faith had much to do with breaking the brazen front of the heresy of Pelagius, the Welsh monk, who taught that man did not need the prevenient grace of God, but could of his own will save his own soul. His celebrated tome was received by the Council of Chalcedon as a true definition of the Faith concerning the two natures of our Lord.

Twice, when Rome lay defenceless, Leo, like a faithful shepherd, went forth to meet the invading chieftains, and to make supplication for his flock. Awed by the commanding eloquence of Leo, and impressed by his majestic aspect, and the splendour of his pontifical vestments, Attila, 'the Scourge of God,' did not even approach the Eternal City, and Leo was hailed as the saviour of Rome.

With Genseric the Vandal he was not so successful, and the pontiff had the grief of seeing the city of his heart's love put to a sack which lasted fourteen days. But he gained his chief object, for the Vandal king, at Leo's petition, left

unharméd the unresisting multitudes, which otherwise would have been subjected to indiscriminate massacre.

St. Leo survived the sack of Rome five years, dying in 461.

APRIL 12

*ST. SABAS THE GOTH, M.*

(A.D. 372)

When the Eastern Empire began to be overrun by the barbarian invaders in the fourth century, many of them were converted to Christianity by the people they conquered. For the most part these converts became Arians, but not all. Sabas was an orthodox Christian, having received baptism in his youth. In 370, Athanaric, one of the kings of the Goths, instituted a savage persecution against the Christians amongst his people. The king's messengers arrived at the town where St. Sabas lived, and required the magistrates to take oath that there were no Christians living there. This they were ready to do, desiring to save their Christian neighbours by the false oath. Sabas stood forth boldly, and said, "Let no man swear for me, I am a Christian." He was asked to make an act of renouncing Christ by eating meats which had been offered to idols. On refusing, he was led to the River Mussovo to die, and he went, full of the joy of the Spirit, praising God that he should thus be chosen to bear witness before the world to his love for the Crucified One.

The local officers were reluctant in their work, having no desire to slay their neighbours. Coming to the river, one of them said, "Why not let this man go? He is innocent of any crime, and the king will never know." Sabas trembled when he saw that the crown of martyrdom was about to be snatched from him, and demanded to know why they were dilatory in obeying their orders. "I see those,"

he said, "on the other side of the river who are waiting to receive me into glory." He was then thrown into the water and strangled. His martyrdom is said to have taken place in 372 in Wallachia where the Mussovo falls into the Danube, a little below Rebnick.

APRIL 13

ST. JUSTIN MARTYR, M.

(A.D. 167)

Justin was a pagan philosopher of great ability and fame who lived in Rome about forty years after the death of St. John. Being convinced of the inadequacy of his heathen philosophy to solve the difficulties of life, he became a Christian when about thirty years old.

He gives us, in his famous *Apologia*, a fascinating story of how he went from one school of philosophy to another, seeking the truth, and finding it not, until he realised that the age-long efforts of philosophy to account for the mysteries of God were but Sisyphus continually returning to his stone. One day, as he walked in baffled meditation by the seashore, he met a man of grave and reverend aspect, who, on entering into conversation with him, told him that, in order to attain the true wisdom, he must pray God to open his eyes, and must turn to Jesus Christ and the prophets.

St. Justin relates how these words kindled a fire within his soul, and following the counsel of the stranger, he found Him whom he realised was indeed the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

He continued his philosophic studies and became the founder of the science of Christian apologetics, that is, the art of defending Christianity by reason and argument. He is called the first of the Fathers. His trenchant defence

of the Faith so enraged his pagan antagonists that they secured his condemnation, and he died in testimony of the Faith in the year 167.

APRIL 14

*ST. FRONTO, Ab.*

(A.D. 636)

Everyone has seen the charming little casts of St. Fronto and his camels, but not everyone knows their story. Fronto, a desert abbot, one day said to his seventy brethren, "Let us go farther into the desert, and serve God in deeper solitude." So they went forth as the swallow, which feeds upon the wing, trusting God to care for them. In a few days their scanty supply of food was exhausted, and the pitiless sands of the desert offered nothing for their sustenance. The brethren lost heart and complained - "Who can endure this kind of life? Can we not serve God as well in towns where food and drink are possible?"

Fronto heard their complaining with a saddened heart. "My sons," he said, "let us have faith in the Gospel, and take no thought for the morrow. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to us."

Now, it happened that just at this hour a rich man, far away on the green banks of the Nile, was taking his repose after a great dinner, and he thought of the holy hermits who served God in the wastes of the desert. His heart smote him, and he determined to send them food. Calling his servants, he had seventy camels loaded with provisions, and then arose the question, 'How, and whither?' "Drive the camels forth into the desert," said the man. "God will send his angel to guide them whither He wills, and if they come safely home again, I shall know that His Divine Majesty has graciously accepted my offering."

The beasts went forth without a driver, or any man to guide them, and on the fourth day, as Fronto and his brethren were at their prayers, they heard the tinkling of distant bells, and, their prayers being finished, they looked out, and, lo, the camels were coming. Relieving them of their burden, Fronto sent them off again. On the eighth day after their departure the rich man and his family were together, and he was troubled in spirit, for he feared that God had not accepted his offering. But as he mused on these things, he lifted up his eyes, and far away along the desert trail he saw the camels, with swift and silent tread, hastening home again ; and every year thenceforth he sent supplies in like manner to the brethren, who, with glad hearts, thus learned the lesson of God's good care for those who love Him and put their trust in Him.

APRIL 15

*ST. PETER GONZALEZ, C.*  
(A.D. 1240)

Peter Gonzalez was a Spanish ecclesiastic who lived in worldly splendour at Astorga in the thirteenth century. Being appointed dean of the cathedral, he determined to be installed in that office with great pomp. For this purpose he made a solemn entry into the town with a retinue of much magnificence, choosing Christmas Day, when he knew the streets would be thronged, so that all the people could see what a fine gentleman he was. His horse, however, took fright and pitched him off in the mud, to the unbounded delight of the crowd. Peter got up in a rage, when suddenly the humour of the situation struck him, and he realised how silly it was to seek the applause of the world. He immediately said, " The world laughs at me, and I will laugh at it ; it plays a trick on me, and I will go one better.

I will have no more to do with it, but I will become a monk." And he did, and that without delay. He entered the Dominican Order, and although his motive was neither worthy nor high, God took him at his word, and so wrought upon him by His Holy Spirit that he became a great Saint.

But the world which he had renounced refused to renounce him. King Ferdinand III insisted that he should act as Court chaplain, and he was with the king in many of his wars against the Moors, introducing into the camp and upon the battlefield that quality of mercy which was unknown in his time. At the fall of Cordova in 1296 it was his interference and intercession which saved the vanquished enemy from massacre, and their virgins from a fate worse than death at the hands of the victorious soldiery. St. Peter died in 1240, and the world which had laughed at his splendour gathered at his bier to venerate his poverty and holiness.

APRIL 16

*ST. MAGNUS, M.*

(A.D. 1110)

Magnus finds his name in two kalendars, that of the great Norse heroes, and that of the Christian Church. He had been reared a Christian, but had never worked at his profession very zealously. In one of the many political upheavals in Scandinavia he found himself on the losing side in a sea-fight. Casting himself overboard, he swam ashore, but the enemy chief sent hounds into the forest after him, and as he had been wounded in the foot, they overtook him. Seeing that nothing was to be gained by waiting for the man-hunters to come up, he tore a branch from a tree, beat off the hounds, and made his escape, seeking refuge with King Malcolm of Scotland.

It was during this exile that, as his saga narrates it, he

‘ began to plough the field of his heart with the share of penitence. He cast forth his sins and bitterness, and adorned himself with great virtues, with godly favour and manly steadfastness.’

Earl Hako was his cousin, and the two of them had divided the Orkney Islands between them, but the greater popularity which Magnus enjoyed aroused Hako’s jealousy against him. He proposed to the Saint that they meet in the lonely islet of Egilsey to ratify their covenant of peace. Each was to come with two boats and a limited number of retainers. Magnus, full of that charity which ‘ thinketh no evil,’ agreed. When he reached the island, although the sea was calm, and there was no surf, the boat gave a violent lurch which caused him to stumble and fall. “ I fear this omen,” he said to his followers.

In the meantime Hako sailed with quite a fleet of boats, and a large body of armed men. When he reached the island, Magnus was engaged in hearing Mass in a little church not far from the landing-place. Hako and his men surrounded the church, and when the Saint came forth, he was instantly seized. Hako ordered his standard-bearer to kill Magnus, but, nobler than his master, the man angrily refused to be a party to such treachery. Hako then ordered one of his servants to deal the fatal stroke. The man hesitated and burst into tears.

“ Be not afraid,” said Magnus, “ the guilt is not thine ; but stand in front of me where I may see thy sword, and smite lustily, for it becometh not a noble to be stricken down like a thief.”

So saying, he signed himself with the Sign of our Redemption, and commended his soul to God. One stroke liberated his soul from its earthly bonds.

APRIL 17

*ST. STEPHEN HARDING, Ab.*

(A.D. 1134)

It is a curious circumstance that while so many Englishmen were great monastic leaders and builders, no lasting Religious Order was founded in the English Church in the days when the great foundations were being laid in many parts of Europe.

St. Stephen Harding was a great English founder, but he did his work in France. The names of his parents and the time and place of his birth are all unknown. He was brought up at Sherborne Abbey in Dorset. He visited Scotland, studied in Paris, and made a pilgrimage to Rome.

On his return from Italy, he entered the monastery of St. Robert of Molesme. With St. Robert and the prior, Blessed Alberic, St. Stephen worked to secure a reform in the great Benedictine Order, and in 1109 he was chosen abbot of Molesme in succession to St. Robert.

For a time the movement did not grow greatly in numbers, but it became more and more widely known as an abode of holiness, where the monks kept the Rule of their holy Father Benedict with great austerity and devotion. One day a knock came at the gate of the little monastery, and on opening it, the porter found a young man with thirty companions, who craved speech with St. Stephen. On being taken to him, to their joyful edification, they found him, not taking his abbatial ease in a well-appointed apartment, but, clad in a workman's smock, in an excavation in the monastery close, helping the brethren to lay the stone and mortar of an addition to the house. Wiping his muddy hands on his apron, he clambered out of the hole to receive the request of him who was to become the great



St. Bernard of Clairvaux, to be allowed with his companions to share his life of poverty and humility.

The coming of this company of novices was the beginning of great things in the new Order. Men by thousands, eager to consecrate themselves to God, flocked into it, and St. Stephen became the father of a great monastic nation. His monasteries were to be found everywhere, and before he received his crown in 1134, he had the happiness of extending his strong and beneficent rule over ninety houses.

Although not founded in England, St. Stephen's Cistercian Order seemed to thrive best under English skies. It may have been some subtle Saxon quality which all unconsciously he infused into the life that made it so attractive to his fellow-countrymen. Tintern, Netley, Rievaulx, Furness, Fountains were all Cistercian, along with many others whose pathetic ruins bear witness at the same time to the ancient piety of our English fathers and to the shameful sacrilege of the great pillage of Bloody Henry. Some families of monks affected the heights of mountains. The Cistercians, typical of their spirit of humility, loved the valleys. 'The Order took to itself all the quiet nooks and valleys, and all the pleasant streams of old England, and gladdened the soul of the labourer by its constant bells.'

St. Stephen's character set forth a rare combination of repose and action. He was a contemplative and an ascetic, but he had a head which could plan, and a calm, strong, deep-running energy to execute great purposes in and for the Kingdom of his divine Master. He entered into the contemplation of the Vision of God on March 28th, 1134.

APRIL 18

*ST. LASCERIAN, Ab.*

(A.D. 639)

One of the amazing wonders of the Christian ages is the mighty strength and learning of the Irish Church at a time when all the rest of Europe was plunged in a Cimmerian gloom of ignorance and semi-pagan debauchery. St. Lascерian was one of those Irish monks and scholars who shed lustre on their country, and were, in the Kingdom of their Father, among those wise ones who 'shine as the brightness of the firmament.'

The known facts of his life are few. He is said to have been a grandson, on the distaff side of the family, of Aidan, 'King of the British Scots,' whatever that may mean. But more illustrious than all the glory which high earthly origin could reflect upon him, he proved himself worthy to be the son of the King of Heaven.

He is said to have made a pilgrimage to Rome when a young man, and to have been ordained to the priesthood by St. Gregory the Great. But whether this be true or not, it is certain that when the violent and heart-breaking controversy arose between the Celtic Church and the rest of western Christendom concerning the date of Easter, St. Lascерian was one of the most powerful protagonists of the Roman use which was adopted at the Council of Whitby in 664 and later became universal in the western world. He presided for many years over the great monastery of Leighlin in Leinster, where he is said to have had 1,500 monks under his rule, who sang the praises of God by night and day. He was buried in his church at Leighlin, and his name has ever been held in lofty veneration by the faithful Irish people.

APRIL 19

*ST. ALPHEGE, B.M.*

(A.D. 1012)

Alphege, a noble Saxon, was called to be Archbishop of Canterbury in the troublous times of the Danish invasion.

In 1011 the Danes landed in Kent and captured the city of Canterbury, taking the archbishop prisoner, and holding him for a great ransom. It was expected that the Christians would be willing to pay the ransom, and indeed they were, but the saintly archbishop, knowing that they had been ravaged by the invaders, and that it would be a sacrifice which they were unable to make, commanded them to desist from their efforts to raise it among the poor people of the diocese.

Enraged at having their avarice thus balked, the Danes fell upon him with great cruelty, whereupon one Dane, said to have been a baptised Christian, and more compassionate than the rest, desiring to put an end to his sufferings, cleft his head with an axe.

He suffered on Easter, 1012, his last words being, like those of the Lord, a prayer for his murderers. His martyrdom took place at Greenwich, where the Danes had carried him as prisoner.

APRIL 20

*ST. ODE, V.*

(A.D. 1158)

St. Ode was the daughter of a nobleman near Brabant. She showed a great spirit of devotion from her earliest childhood, and her parents, who were by no means indevout folk, were ready enough to encourage her until, too late

to counteract the holy influences which had worked upon her, they realised that her heart's desire was to become a nun.

Her father was determined to put a prompt stop to any such foolishness, and arranged to marry her to a neighbouring gentleman. She protested, but he would listen to nothing, and as young women of that day, quite unlike those of our more degenerate times, were accustomed to do what they were told, no one gave two thoughts to her objection, and all went as merry as a marriage bell until the crucial moment of the ceremony arrived.

"Wilt thou take this man to be thy wedded husband?" asked the priest. Ode remained silent. The company was much embarrassed, and one of the ladies present whispered to her that it was rude to make no response. The priest repeated the question, upon which she said with great firmness, "I will not." The consternation can be better imagined than described. After numerous persecutions on the part of her family, she was allowed to follow her divine Spouse, and became a holy abbess of the Norbertine Order. She died in 1158.

APRIL 21

*ST. ANSELM, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 1109)

The name of Anselm occurs both in the kalendar of the Saints and in the catalogue of the philosophers. In this truly remarkable man were united sanctity of a high degree and rare intellectual ability. He was born in north Italy in the picturesque mountain city of Aosta. His mother, to whom he was devoted, died when he was little more than a child, 'and the ship of his heart lost its anchor and drifted off into the waves of the world.' The memory of her love and tenderness made it all the more difficult for him to

bear the harshness of his father, who was a man of violent and unsympathetic nature, and Anselm left his native land and journeyed over the Alps to France, where he entered the celebrated abbey of Bec under another Italian, Lanfranc.

Bec was to be Anselm's home for many years. Here he received that mental training and acquired the learning which enabled him later to produce those deep theological treatises which place him amongst the first of the Church's teachers. Amongst these was his book entitled *Cur Deus Homo*, which is one of the most lucid demonstrations of the reasonableness of the doctrine of the Incarnation of God the Eternal Son that has ever been made. It is a Christian classic, and after nearly nine hundred years it can be found in English translation in many popular editions.

But Anselm was not to pass his life in the calm of philosophical speculation. Lanfranc, his old teacher at Bec, who had gone with William the Conqueror to England as Archbishop of Canterbury, was dead, and unexpectedly and against his own strong opposition, Anselm was now put into that high dignity by William Rufus, the son of the Conqueror. William was a violent and wicked man. He persecuted the archbishop whom he had appointed, until at length Anselm went into voluntary exile. The king insisted on exercising certain alleged rights which amounted to giving over the conduct of the Church's life into secular hands. This Anselm resisted with all his power.

The case was appealed to Rome, but Pope Urban II, more of a politician than a pastor, did nothing. Within fifteen months both pope and king were dead. Urban died in July 1099, and a year later the Red King was struck down by an arrow while hunting in the New Forest. Whether his death was from design or accident will never be known. His brother, Henry Beauclerc, succeeded him, and Paschal II reigned in Urban's stead in Rome.

The new king recalled Anselm, but there was little relief from persecution. Henry required that Anselm,

besides taking an oath of allegiance to him, should be invested over again with his office. This amounted to a claim that the office of the bishop was derived from that of the king, and was subordinate to it, and that the archbishop's commission lapsed on the death of the sovereign. Anselm would not listen to the proposition, and it was agreed to send the cause to Rome again. Both the archbishop and the king's advocate appeared in the pope's court, and the advocate, mindful of Urban's timidity, thought the new pope was a man to be bullied. "Know all men present," he proclaimed proudly in the hearing of the assembled court, "that not to save his kingdom will King Henry lose the investitures of the churches." If Henry's representative was looking for a prompt solution of the case, he found it. The papal retort was devastating. "Nor before God, to save his head, will Pope Paschal let him have them," thundered the pontiff.

This declaration saved the English Church from becoming a mere appendage of the English crown. But Henry was still obdurate, and during the processes of the appeal he had showed his temper by appointing bishops and insisting on their consecration without any canonical election. Amongst his appointments at this time was that of a certain Roger of Caen to be Bishop of Salisbury, he having recommended himself to the king's favour by the swiftness with which he got through his Mass.

In the face of these conditions, the archbishop sadly proceeded to prepare for the royal excommunication. Terrified as he faced this final issue of the case, Henry yielded. He was a stubborn monarch, but was far from being ungenerous, and in his surrender he recognised the greatness of the man with whom he had to deal. Restored to his flock, the great archbishop died at Canterbury in 1109. His bones are interred in the beautiful tower which bears his name, in the great cathedral over which he ruled.

APRIL 22

*ST. LEONIDES, M.*  
(A.D. 202)

In the persecution of Severus the most illustrious of the martyrs whose sufferings ennobled the city of Alexandria was Leonides, the father of the great Christian scholar, Origen. He was a Christian philosopher, and so devoted was he to his Faith that, after the baptism of his son, it is said that he was accustomed to go to his bed at night, and uncovering the child's breast, kiss it as he slept, as being the temple of the Holy Ghost. When he was cast into prison for his Faith, Origen, then a lad of only seventeen, wrote him a letter, exhorting him not to let the love of his family cause him to shrink from the sword, but to hold fast and to look forward with joy to the crown of martyrdom which awaited him. Leonides was beheaded in the year 202, and his memory has been one of the brightest ornaments of the Alexandrian Church.

APRIL 23

*ST. GEORGE, M.*  
(A.D. 285)

Few saints have received such universal recognition as St. George, and concerning few is less known. His name is in almost every Christian kalendar in the world, and he had acquired world-fame as early as the year 494, when Pope Gelasius wrote concerning him, telling us that his so-called 'Acts,' which even at that early date had wide circulation throughout the Christian world, were spurious. These stories recount his adventures with a certain dragon at Silene, in Libya, that lived in a lake and used to come

up to the city gates seeking food. Armed hosts were sent against him, but his chief defence was his breath, which was so poisonous that, when he snorted, whole ranks of men fell dead before him like flies before a blast of insect powder. To discourage his visits the people fed him two sheep daily, and when the supply of sheep was exhausted they threw their sons and daughters to him.

St. George, happening to ride by one morning, saw, weeping by the shore, a maiden, very beautiful, of course, for even in that day it was a well-known fact of natural history that plain-favoured maidens were distasteful to dragons, and they would have none of them. As he was about to enquire into the cause of her tears, the dragon rose up out of the water, and was preparing to seize her when St. George charged down upon him and transfixed him with his lance. He called to the maiden to halter him with her girdle, whereupon the dragon followed her, as docile as a lap-dog. Leading him into the market-place, the Saint, in the presence of the king and all the people, struck off his head. The incident so worked upon the spectators that they all, from the king down, to the number of twenty thousand, 'not counting women and children,' immediately clamoured to receive baptism, which was accordingly administered to them.

This is the story which for ages was universally accepted. It found its way into breviaries and missals throughout the Church, and inspired the brush of some of the greatest artists. Of course, the story is easily recognised as one form of a sun-myth, as ancient as history itself, and which finds place in the mythology of many peoples in widely separated parts of the world. This legend was removed from the Church's Office Books by Pope Clement VII.

We may dismiss this story without further consideration, but we cannot so lightly dismiss the Saint. Although little is known of him, there can be no doubt that he was a Christian martyr, who suffered for his Faith about the



end of the third century. The Greeks distinguish him by the title 'The Great Martyr.' He is said to have suffered at or near Lydda in Palestine, probably during the Diocletian persecution. He seems to have been a soldier by profession, and like so many of his Christian brothers in arms, he refused to sacrifice to the gods, and gladly paid the penalty with his life.

The Crusades had much to do with popularising his cultus in the West. It was said that he was seen assisting the Franks at the battle of Antioch in 1098. A gigantic figure appeared amongst the Christian host, glowing with a heavenly radiance, and charging with the Christian knights, he put to flight the armies of the Saracens by the awful majesty of his countenance. These stories were brought back to England by the Crusaders, and they appealed so powerfully to the imagination of the people that St. George was declared to be the patron of England, and enrolled amongst the Seven Champions of Christendom.

APRIL 24

*ST. FIDELIS, M.*

(A.D. 1622)

Fidelis was a Capuchin monk, and was born at Samarlingen in 1577. During the reign of Calvinism in Switzerland, he was sent to that unhappy country to minister to the few Catholics who were left, and to seek to bring back whom he could to the Faith. While preaching at Sevis he was fired upon by a Calvinist, but was unhurt. After the sermon he was followed by a body of Protestant soldiers, who demanded that he cease to preach the Catholic Gospel and accept the Calvinist creed. "I came to refute your errors, not to embrace them," was his courageous reply. The words were his death warrant. One of the soldiers struck

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him to the ground by a blow with the flat of his sword. The martyr rose to his knees, and stretching out his arms in the form of a cross, cried, "Pardon them, O Lord, for, blinded by their passions, they know not what they do. Lord Jesus, have pity on me. Mary, Mother of Jesus, succour me." Another blow from a sword clave his head. After mutilating the body with their daggers, they left it in the road without so much as giving it decent burial. A devout woman who lived near the scene of the martyrdom rescued his body and kept it until his brethren were able to take charge of it. He was slain on this day, 1622.

It is said that the Saint had a premonition from God that on that day he would seal his Faith in his blood. Before going to the place of preaching he made his confession with great compunction, celebrated Mass, and then went forth to his expected sacrifice with every manifestation of joy. Like St. Stephen, he won his chief persecutor by his death. The soldiers acted under the direction of a Calvinist minister who was consenting unto his death. He was so profoundly moved by the martyr's quiet heroism that he renounced his errors and was received into the Catholic Church.

APRIL 25

*ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST, M.*

(ABOUT A.D. 68)

This Evangelist is said to have been of the tribe of Levi, and, therefore, of the priestly line. His name, which is a Roman one, was probably assumed by him. This seems to have been the custom of the Jews, as is instanced in St. Paul's change of his name.

The tradition is that he was a disciple of St. Peter, and that he procured the materials from that Apostle for his

Gospel. He was sent into Egypt to plant the standard of the Cross. He made his headquarters at Alexandria, and his preaching converted multitudes. He also made frequent excursions into other parts of Egypt, teaching the Faith with power and success.

The enemy of souls could not long endure him, and stirred up the mob against him. Eastertide was the season of the great heathen solemnities of Serapis, and, roused to a passionate vindication of the honour of this divinity, from whose shrine this Saint had snatched many worshippers, the frenzied devotees of the idol seized him, and binding him with cart ropes, dragged him by the feet through the streets until he was dead. His noble witness for our Lord took place about the year 68.

He is symbolised in art by the lion, although the origin of this symbol is not known. It has been thought by some to have reference to the old popular belief that the young lion cub is born dead, and is brought to life on the third day by the breath of its sire, the reference being to the vivid accounts given by St. Mark of our Lord's Resurrection.

APRIL 26

*ST. TRUDPERT, M.*

(A.D. 643)

About the year 640, a wanderer, Trudpert by name, knocked at the gate of the castle of Count Othpert of Hapsburg, asking the boon of a night's lodging and a crust of bread. He was a pilgrim returning from Rome, and in those days when men, though often barbarous and cruel, believed in the Christian Faith, a pilgrim was a man whom not to receive would have been an impiety.

Count Othpert welcomed him gladly, and would not permit him to hasten his departure, but detained him that he

might speak with him concerning the needs of his own soul. In the so called 'ages of the Faith,' in spite of the hardness and brutality of the times, men believed in God, and counted it a blessing that nothing else could supply, to have some holy man live on their estates and engage himself in continual prayer. It was this spirit which was responsible for the founding of most of the great monasteries and hermitages which in that brutal age proved the salvation of Europe. Learning that it was Trudpert's ambition to retire into some secluded place and give his life to exercises of devotion, Othpert conceived how blessed a thing it would be to have this saintly wayfarer remain on his estates, spending his nights and days in prayer for him and those he loved. He therefore introduced him to a secluded glen in one of the most beautiful valleys of the Black Forest, a green and secret retreat where a man might give his time to meditation and intercession, shut out from the world's clamour. Othpert built an oratory here, and for several years Trudpert devoted himself to God.

But his neighbours were not all imbued with the spirit of his patron. The Saint's efforts to protect the oppressed and the poor made him not a few enemies, not to speak of his own personal life which was a silent but perpetual rebuke to the wicked. His resolute holiness aroused the anger of certain men of the country. One day two of them came to his oratory, and found him asleep on the rude seat which he had set up by the bank of the little mountain stream whose cooling waters ran close by his abode. One of them in wanton cruelty clave his skull with an axe. St. Trudpert has always been accorded the honours of martyrdom, and in after time, under his invocation, a monastery arose upon the site of his little oratory. His death occurred in 643.

APRIL 27

*ST. ZITA, V.*  
(A.D. 1278)

St. Zita is the patron of cooks. She was born near Lucca in Italy in 1218. Many beautiful stories are told of her communion with the unseen world. On one eve of the feast of St. Mary Magdalene she wished to make a pilgrimage to a church dedicated to that Saint some miles away. But night overtook her, and she reached the church after it had been locked, and in the midst of a heavy storm. Sinking down against the closed door, she lighted the little votive candle she had brought, and began to pray. She prayed for many hours, recking not of the storm, and after a time fell asleep. When she awoke, the dawn was radiant in the east, and at her side twinkled the little candle in the dusk, and no drop of the storm had touched her, for all night long angel wings had been spread in protection over her.

She died in Lucca in her sixtieth year, having been in the domestic service of the noble family of Pagano de Fatinelli for forty-eight years, whose appreciation of her character was so great that during much of that period she stood to them almost in the relation of a spiritual director.

APRIL 28

*ST. APHRODISIUS, M.*  
(DATE UNCERTAIN)

This Saint was martyred for the Faith at a very early period of the Church's history, perhaps in apostolic times. Some say he bore his witness at Tarsus in Cilicia, the birth-place of St. Paul. Another tradition declares him to have

been the first Bishop of Beziers in France, where he is said to have suffered martyrdom.

Little is known of St. Aphrodisius, but there is a curious and engaging legend, which was long accepted, although it has no historical foundation, that he was an Egyptian who, when the Blessed Mother Mary fled into Egypt with her Child to escape the wrath of Herod, gave them hospitality. The story continues that in his old age he heard of the preaching of Christ, and coming to Judæa to find Him, arrived just after the Resurrection, and that, joining himself to the disciples, he received the Holy Ghost with them on Pentecost.

The Flight into Egypt is, perhaps, next to the Passion, the most dramatic incident in our Lord's earthly life, and the fact that it has been the will of God to veil it in complete mystery, has, in every age, made it a fascinating theme for historical speculation. But even if St. Aphrodisius did not receive the Infant Christ in his house in Egypt, he received Him in his heart, and ministered to Him often in the persons of His poor, and laid down his life for Him at the last. No other service would have gained for him so rich a crown.

APRIL 29

*ST. PETER MARTYR, M.*

(A.D. 1252)

In different ages of the world different emphases in regard to the Faith appear. No one to-day, who in any sense calls himself a Christian, would deny that God made heaven and earth, and yet it was for the truth of this article of the Creed that Peter Martyr shed his blood.

He was born in Verona about 1205. At this time the Manichæans had won many converts in Italy and France. They held that material matter was essentially evil, and

therefore it could not have been created by God, but must have some evil being as its author. The Saint's parents belonged to this sect, and on discovering that their son had learned the Apostles' Creed at the school to which he had been sent, they sought by every means to dislodge from his mind the truths it had received. Their efforts were in vain, for the young boy, with the simplicity and directness of the little child, saw the reasonableness of the Faith, and nothing could turn him from it.

He grew up with an intense love of the Catholic religion, and in early manhood he was professed in the Dominican Order, attaining to great distinction through the ability and eloquence with which he confounded the heretics. So enraged were his opponents that they determined to put a violent end to his activities. In 1252 he was on his way from Como to Milan, when he was waylaid at a little village called Barlasina. He was struck on the head with a hatchet, after which Carinus, one of the party, to make sure of the accomplishment of their evil purpose, stabbed him to the heart with a dagger.

His body was found a few hours later, and it was seen that as he was dying, before the final stroke was given him, he had traced in the dust of the road where he fell, the words '*Credo in Deum* (I believe in God).' Thus in his last act in his last hour he gave testimony to the Faith by which he lived.

His death converted his murderer. When a hue and cry was raised, Carinus fled out of the territory of Milan to Forli, where, overcome with remorse at his crime, he renounced his heresy and became a penitent lay-brother in the same Order which his victim had so gloriously adorned in life and in death.

Fra Angelico, who was also a Dominican, painted in the cloister of San Marco in Florence a great picture of the martyr, represented with his finger on his lips—the symbol of discretion—which is familiar to us all.

APRIL 30

*ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA, V.*

(A.D. 1380)

Catherine Benincasa was born in a little steep street in Siena in 1347. She was the eighteenth child of Giacomo, a tanner. Reared amid humble surroundings, she was destined to an immortal career as one of the greatest of mystics, and as a diplomat of no mean ability. It was she who was to bring back the Pope to Rome after his long exile in Avignon.

God early gave her proofs of what great things she was to do and suffer for His Name. When only six years of age, she saw in a vision our Lord in glory, seated amongst His apostles. This was but the first of many visions. Once our Lord placed a ring on her finger, to show that she was His betrothed. Again, He appeared to her, holding two crowns, one of gold, and one of sharp and piercing thorns, and asked her which she chose. Without a moment's hesitation, Catherine reached for the thorny diadem. Yet again her divine Bridegroom honoured her, by sharing with her the marks of His Passion.

With all this, one might think that she was leading the life of some cloistered nun, but Catherine was far from that. She was for years the household drudge ; and later when her extraordinary sanctity and ability could no longer be hid, she was called hither and thither through Italy, and even went to Avignon, reconciling warring factions, and making peace between hostile powers. She persuaded Pope Gregory to return to Rome in 1376. It was here that the holy woman died a few years later. Among her last words were these : " I have not sought vainglory, but only the glory and praise of God."



MAY 1

*SS. PHILIP AND JAMES, App.*  
(1ST CENTURY)

ST. PHILIP was a Jew of Bethsaida, the city of St. Andrew and St. Peter. From the narrative in the Gospels, it would seem that St. Philip was our Lord's first apostle, accepting His call, and leaving all for Him, before any others. St. Andrew and St. Peter were the first of the Twelve to converse with our Lord, but they returned to their trade before following Him. St. Clement of Alexandria, who wrote about the year 215, says that it was well known in his time that St. Philip was the disciple who asked our Lord to allow him first to go and bury his father. Ancient writers tell us that he worked for the spread of the Gospel in Asia Minor, and was martyred at Hierapolis in Phrygia. The accounts vary as to the manner of his death. Some authorities say he was hanged from a pillar until life was extinct; others that he was crucified.

Associated with St. Philip in the Church's kalendar is St. James the Less, the first Bishop of Jerusalem. It was to him that St. Paul applied after his conversion, and on St. Peter's deliverance from prison, he charged his friends to report the matter to St. James.

This Saint spent a large part of his life in Jerusalem and so great a reputation did he establish among all classes of people of whatever religion, that he was known as 'the Just.' His reputation was a great asset in propagating the Faith in Judæa, and, exasperated by their failure to counteract his influence and teaching, the Jews cast him down from a pinnacle of the Temple. He was not killed by the fall but was able to rise to his knees, when he was overwhelmed by a shower of stones. His brains were finally beaten out with a fuller's club.

St. Jerome in the fourth century gives the account current in his day of how our Lord appeared to St. James, as we are told by St. Paul. St. James, he says, had vowed at the Last Supper that he would eat no more until he saw his Master risen from the dead. Our Lord, therefore, appeared unto him, and setting bread before him, blessed and brake it, saying : " Eat thy bread, for the Son of Man is risen from among them that sleep."

There is no tradition which affords any satisfactory explanation why these two apostles are commemorated on the same day. The Orientals keep November 14th as St. Philip's feast.

MAY 2

*ST. ATHANASIUS, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 375)

It was in Alexandria, the brilliant metropolis of Egypt, that Athanasius was born and spent the years of his childhood. When a very young man he entered the ministry under the venerable patriarch Alexander. This good old man was engaged in a distressing controversy with one of his presbyters, Arius by name, who had the temerity to deny that God the Son was consubstantial with the Father.

The heresy spread beyond the confines of Alexandria until the whole East was in a ferment. In order to secure peace, the Emperor Constantine called a council of bishops at Nicæa, which met in May 325.

Athanasius attended the council in the retinue of Alexander, and despite his youth, he took a prominent part in the discussions. Arius was condemned, and the year following the council, St. Athanasius succeeded Alexander as the archbishop of his native city.

In spite of the action of the council, many of the most powerful forces in the empire continued to support

Arianism, and St. Athanasius was driven from his see, and his life was for a long time in danger. It was indeed 'Athanasius against the world.' But the great bishop did not shrink from imperilling his life where the Faith was at stake, and, humanly speaking, it was his firmness and courage that saved the Church from the ravages of the wolves of heresy.

He died in 373, and has ever been venerated as one of the greatest defenders of the Faith whom God has raised up for the help of His persecuted Church.

MAY 3

### *THE INVENTION OF THE HOLY CROSS*

(ABOUT A.D. 326)

The date of the finding of the Cross upon which our Lord suffered His Passion cannot be ascertained with exactness, but it is supposed to have been about the year 326. At this time, St. Helena, the mother of Constantine the Great, being then about eighty years of age, made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and set on foot the work of restoring the Holy Places which had fallen into a sad condition of decay.

During the work of excavation, three crosses were unearthed on Calvary. The Cross of our Lord, so one ancient story goes, was identified by being applied to the body of a sick person who immediately recovered. While we do not doubt for a moment the possibility of such miracles, yet if there is a tradition which is a little less thaumaturgic it would seem wise to adopt it. St. Ambrose of Milan, who was born in 340, thirteen years after the event, preserves the tradition that the Cross of Christ was recognised by the title placed on it by Pilate, which was still attached to it. St. Macarius, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, co-operated with St. Helena in this work, and a magnificent basilica

was erected as a shrine for this inestimable treasure.

The earliest direct testimony concerning the finding of the Cross is given by St. Cyril, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who was born about 315 and wrote about the Cross some twenty years after its discovery. St. Ambrose, as we have seen, gives his testimony regarding it, and St. Rufinus, who was probably born in the same year as St. Ambrose, also bears witness to the fact. Sylvia of Aquitaine, who visited Jerusalem in 385, and wrote a full account of what she saw, tells us that the Feast of the Finding, or Invention, of the Cross was observed when she was there.

The Cross was carried into Persia when Chosroes sacked Jerusalem in the seventh century. It was returned with the seals of the reliquary unbroken when peace was secured with Persia by the Emperor Heraclius, and it remained in Jerusalem, venerated by millions from every part of the Christian world. When the Saracens conquered Palestine in the seventh century, and the Holy City fell into their hands, they respected this precious relic, leaving it in the care of the patriarch, and no infidel hand was stretched forth to desecrate it.

For five hundred and fifty years this situation continued, until the culmination of the Crusades. The kingdom of Jerusalem had been established, and for one hundred and eighty-seven years the Holy City was ruled by Christian kings. Then came the final struggle for the Holy Places, and the crescent was once more triumphant. The fifth day of July, 1187, saw, on the field of Hattin in Galilee, the most terrific conflict that has ever been joined between Christian and infidel. The army of the Crusaders had brought the True Cross in its magnificent reliquary on to the battle-field. Around it rallied the finest chivalry of Europe, when the Sultan Saladin, at the head of twenty thousand horsemen, charged the little hill upon which this holy standard was erected. Perhaps no other such battle has ever been fought in the history of all the world's wars.

Not until the last man of all that brilliant chivalry was beaten down beneath the maces of the Saracens did the standard fall ; and the heart of Christian Europe was broken when the awful news ran from land to land that the sacred wood of the True Cross was in the hands of the infidels.

At the siege of Acre in 1190, the Sultan offered to surrender the Cross as one of the terms of peace, but the Christians failed to keep their word, and it was not returned. As late as 1192, we hear of its being in the possession of Saladin in Jerusalem, when he allowed certain English Crusaders, among them the Bishop of Salisbury, to kiss it. Then it disappeared, and no man has heard of it to this day.

But it was not wholly lost. All through Christendom tiny fragments of the wood by which came salvation had been distributed, and to-day, in many lands, the faithful still venerate the sacred relics.

MAY 4

*ST. MONICA, W.*  
(A.D. 388)

St. Monica was the mother of the great St. Augustine of Hippo. She has ever presented to the Church two lessons. The first is that of the value of persevering intercessory prayer. Her son in his younger years was a man of the world, with all the sins of the men of the world of his age. Monica prayed for his conversion. Event after event occurred to discourage her, but never once did this noble soul lose heart. It looked many times as though the cause of his conversion was hopeless. But through the power of her prayers she won him for God. An aged bishop had said to her years before, "The son of so many prayers cannot be lost." And so, by the mercy of God, it proved. She

lived to see her son return from his errors and sins, and embrace the Faith with a zeal which made him one of the greatest teachers the Catholic Faith has ever known.

The second lesson was that of the duty of prayers for the faithful departed. When she was dying in Italy, far from her beloved Carthage, her son asked her if she desired her body to be buried with her loved ones at her old home. She replied, "It matters not, my son, where this body is laid, but pray for my soul at the altar of God."

The date of St. Monica's birth is not known. She was a Christian married to a pagan husband, Patricius. But by her prayers she won him also to the Faith, and had the joy of seeing him baptised before his death. She followed Augustine from Africa to Italy, and shortly after his baptism by St. Ambrose at Milan in 387, she died at Ostia, having been seized with a fatal illness as they were waiting for a ship to take them back to their native land. There is no more tender and beautiful passage in literature, ancient or modern, than the account given by St. Augustine of his own conversion, and his mother's death, which appears in his *Confessions*.

MAY 5

ST. HILARY OF ARLES, B.C.

(A.D. 449)

This Saint was a disciple of the great Honoratus who founded the monastic establishment of Lerins off the Mediterranean coast of France. When St. Honoratus was made Archbishop of Arles in 426, St. Hilary went with him, although he left his heart in the island sanctuary. In 429 St. Honoratus died, and Hilary, happy to be relieved of contact with the world, hastened to return to Lerins. But no sooner did the citizens of Arles learn of his departure than they sent after him post-haste, and in the summary

manner characteristic of those times, compelled him to return and be consecrated as his friend's successor.

He was pre-eminent in his time as a teacher and preacher, and in both offices he feared the face of no man. He had had frequent occasion to rebuke the chief magistrate of Arles for his evil life, but without effect. One day he was preaching in the cathedral when the magistrate entered in state, attended by his officers. The Saint broke off his sermon abruptly, saying to the people that this dignitary had so often neglected the counsel given for his salvation that he was not worthy to partake of the nourishment of the Word. The magistrate withdrew in confusion and wrath, whereupon the Saint resumed his discourse.

St. Hilary was a man, not only of holiness, but of great force of character, which brought him into collision not infrequently with evil doers. He took the position that he had not wanted to be archbishop, but now that they had forced this office upon him, they must take him as he was. Some of those who fell under his discipline were not so patient, however, and appealed to Pope Leo at Rome. Hilary met the appeal militantly, and when his plea to the pope not to infringe the ancient privileges of the Gallic Church proved of no avail, he boldly stood on the ground of the prerogatives of his see. Thinking his life to be in danger, he fled from Rome, and though it was in the depth of winter, he found his way across the Alps back to Arles.

What really happened, it is difficult to know. Both men were Saints, and both were human. Doubtless there was fault on both sides while they both acted conscientiously. The author of his biography tells us that St. Hilary, having made overtures of reconciliation to St. Leo, wore himself out with toils and austerities, and died before he had completed his forty-first year. It is said that Arles accorded him a splendid funeral, even the Jews being clamorous in their grief for the prelate in whom they had never found anything save a kindly counsellor. He died in 449.

MAY 6

*ST. JOHN DAMASCENE, C.*

(ABOUT A.D. 770)

Throughout the English-speaking world, the joyous Easter hymns, 'Come ye faithful, raise the strain,' and 'The day of Resurrection,' are known and loved. Yet probably few who join in singing them know that these hymns were originally composed by a Greek monk, John of Damascus, who lived in the eighth century. Because of his beautiful hymns he is regarded as the greatest of the poets of the Eastern Church.

St. John is honoured as one of her teachers by the universal Church because of his advocacy of the proper veneration due to sacred images. He was the champion of the doctrine enunciated by the second Council of Nicæa, as was St. Athanasius of the decrees of the first. The good monk realised that the piety of his fellow Christians would suffer if deprived of the stimulus of sacred art.

An Eastern legend tells us how the Greek emperor, Leo the Isaurian, the opponent of the holy images, desired to destroy St. John, who was a subject of the Caliph. The emperor caused to be forged a letter purporting to have been written by John, containing a treasonable offer to betray Damascus to the Christians. This was sent by the crafty Leo to the Caliph, who was naturally infuriated upon learning its contents. Not doubting John's guilt with this evidence before him, the despot ordered the hand which he thought had penned the treasonable message to be cut off. St. John, knowing himself to be innocent, knelt before an image of the blessed Virgin and prayed that his hand might be restored to him. As he prayed he fell into a sleep, and when he awoke, lo, the severed member had been restored !



MAY 7

*ST. JOHN OF BEVERLEY, B.C.*

(A.D. 721)

This Saint was a north of England man, but was educated at Canterbury under Archbishop Theodore. Returning to his own country, he served in St. Hilda's monastery at Whitby, till, in the reign of Alfred the Great, he became Bishop of Hexham. When St. Wilfred returned from his exile, he claimed that the diocese of Hexham was his, and had been intruded into by St. John. The latter, devoted as he was to a life of prayer, gladly resigned the burden, but the Church would not permit a man of his learning and sanctity to remain long out of her counsels. The diocese of York falling vacant, he was promoted to be its archbishop. Serving in this capacity for several years, in 717, when incapacitated by age and his incessant labours, he resigned the see into the hands of his chaplain, Wilfred the younger. He then retired to Beverley, some distance from York, where he had founded a monastery some years before, and the remaining four years of his life were spent in the retirement of prayer. He died in 721, and his memory has come down the centuries as that of one of the saintliest men who have sat on the throne of York.

MAY 8

*ST. PETER OF TARENTEISE, B.C.*

(A.D. 1175)

St. Peter was a native of Dauphiné in France and was born about the year 1102. He was educated in the Cistercian monastery of Bonneraux, which had lately been founded

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under the austere rule of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. He was so good a religious that after two years he was sent to found and rule a monastery of the Order at Tamies in the diocese of Tarentaise ; and so ably did he administer this foundation that in 1142 he was chosen archbishop of the diocese.

The fame of his holiness went abroad, and the poor bishop was distressed, and his humility grievously wounded, by the great crowds which came, not only for counsel and consolation, but to demand that he heal their sick and work for them all manner of miracles.

The Saint thought he knew of a way to put a stop to this business. One morning when they went to call him for Mattins he was nowhere to be found. He had vanished, as it were, into thin air. For a few days no great alarm was felt. Perhaps he had gone off to some corner of his diocese. But when the days began to run into weeks and no word came concerning him, consternation ensued. The alarm was sent out, and search was instituted everywhere, but to no avail. Feeling quite sure that he would never abandon his religious profession, a young monk, especially devoted to the Saint, offered to make the round of the monasteries in that part of Europe in the hope of finding him. His quest had continued for a year, when one morning while staying at a monastery in Switzerland, as he was watching the lay-brothers going forth to their work in the fields, he recognised among them his beloved bishop. Running to him, he embraced his feet, and claimed him as his master. The good monks were amazed when they discovered that the pilgrim they had admitted a year before as a humble lay-brother was none other than the famed Saint and Archbishop of Tarentaise. The young man led the weeping archbishop back home, while great throngs lined the roads, greeting him with shouts and tears of joy.

Shortly after his return, all Europe fell into the greatest disorder. A many-cornered conflict arose in which the

Emperor Frederick Barbarossa, several popes and anti-popes, and the Roman Senate, were all involved. Added to this was the rise of a republican party in Italy under Arnold of Brescia. Europe was split into a hundred factions, and while the great majority of them hailed the so-called Victor IV as the legitimate pontiff, St. Peter held fast to Alexander III, and finally all the world came round to his way of thinking. Naturally this enhanced his reputation greatly, and few men of his time had more distinguished honours thrust upon them or received them with so much humility. In 1175, while returning from a fruitless embassy to secure peace between the kings of England and France, he fell ill by the way. Lying down beside a stream which plunged down the mountain-side near the abbey of Bellevaux, his strength departed, and it was evident that the old man was dying. He was borne into the monastery, and his spirit went to its rest as he entered its walls.

MAY 9

*ST. GREGORY OF NAZIANZEN, B.C.D.*  
(A.D. 391)

St. Gregory was a man of gentle and affectionate nature who, at almost every juncture in his life, found himself in places wholly unsuited to his genius. In spite of these untoward conditions under which he had to work, he made a deep impression on his own time, and after ages have honoured him by numbering him amongst the four Doctors of the Eastern Church, his intimate friend St. Basil, St. John Chrysostom, and St. Athanasius being the other three.

St. Gregory was born about the year 329 in the village of Arianza in Cappadocia. His father was a member of a heretical sect, but was converted to the orthodox Faith

through the influence of his wife, and was consecrated bishop of his village in the same year his son was born. Gregory was sent to the philosophical schools of Athens, and was there a fellow-student of the brilliant young Julian who, later, as emperor, earned the unhappy title of the Apostate by seeking to restore the worship of the old gods as the State religion. •

In 356 with his dear friend, St. Basil, he retired into a solitude, for a life of study and prayer. But he was not long to enjoy these delights. St. Basil, against Gregory's strong protest, insisted on consecrating him Bishop of Sasima, and this incident had much to do with the breach in their friendship which was the saddest incident in the lives of both these devoted Saints. Gregory, feeling himself utterly unfitted for the post, refused to continue in his see. He returned home, and for a number of years assisted his aged father in the conduct of the affairs of his Church, although he refused, on the latter's death, to accept the jurisdiction of the diocese.

The fame of his holiness and ability had gone abroad, and so small a church as that of the little Cappadocian country town could not hold him. For thirty-two years Constantinople had been under the domination of the Arian heresy, and the Catholics, determining to organise a militant campaign for the Faith, sent for Gregory. With much reluctance he came out of his life of seclusion, and gave himself to the work, but never did he feel himself less competent to cope with the task assigned him than in the turmoil of the contending factions in the great capital. In spite of his diffidence, however, his life was to be one of the many proofs that the best work amongst men, whether in the Church or the world, is often done by those who, while suffering from an inferiority complex, yet have faith and courage to grapple with problems as they arise. But great numbers of conversions followed his preaching, and so mighty was the charm of his eloquence that even the

Arians crowded to hear him. The result of his mission was that in a short time the Catholic Faith was once more in the ascendant, and a further consequence, far less to the Saint's liking, was that he was raised to the patriarchal throne of Constantinople.

In the flush of victory certain ill-advised Catholics, mindful of the long generation of cruel persecution they had endured from the Arians, clamoured for reprisals. Gregory stayed them instantly. "Let us never be insolent when the times are favourable," he said. "Let us rejoice that the peril has been removed from us, but hold in abhorrence all suggestion of taking vengeance on those from whom we have suffered."

But amidst the splendour of the dissolute capital, he carried in his bosom the heart of a recluse. Twice had he been drawn from solitude to serve the Church, and he longed for the quiet nights and days of prayer. His friend Basil had died in 379, and the memory of their happy companionship of prayer drew him more and more to the desire for the hermit life. He had proved the saviour of the Church of Constantinople in the time of her dire need, and now the great Church council of 381 was about to convene to put its seal on the triumph of truth over error. But the gathering, which should have given a signal demonstration of how good and joyful a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity, was torn with factional strife. Sick at heart, and hoping that his retirement would pacify the contending parties, he obtained leave of the council and the emperor to lay down the burden. He retired to end his days at Arianza, where the scenes he had loved in the freshness of his youth solaced him in his declining years. He went to his rest in the year 391.

MAY 10

*ST. ANTONINUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 1459)

Everyone who has visited Florence remembers the lovely little city of Fiesole which stands three miles away, on the heights above the Arno. Here, in his sixteenth year, Antoninus was in 1405 admitted to the Dominican Order. No routine friar was he. Never was a life more wholeheartedly devoted to God and His poor. Against his will he was made Archbishop of Florence, and he scandalised the worldly as much as he edified the faithful, by the simplicity and poverty of his life. His office brought him vast revenues. Everything was given to the poor. He kept scarcely sufficient food and clothing for himself, so eager was he to relieve distress wherever he saw it. Not the least sentimentality did he show, however, in dealing with the unworthy poor. During a pestilence, when many were of necessity driven to beg, two blind beggars amassed, one two hundred, and the other three hundred, ducats. Deaf to their protestations, the Saint summarily took the money from them, and distributed it to the needy of the city.

He died on this day in 1459, embracing his crucifix. His last words were, "To serve God is to reign."

MAY 11

*ST. MAMERTUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 480)

This saint gave the Rogation Days to the Church. He was Bishop of Vienne in southern France about the year 480. His city had been suffering from many calamities.

It had been shaken by earthquake, and on Easter night a vast conflagration swept a wide area, and so great was the terror of both man and beast that the wolves from the mountains invaded the streets, attacking the citizens and spreading consternation everywhere.

St. Mamertus, prostrate before the altar in his cathedral, resolved that if prayer could save his people, saved they should be. He ordered that on the three days before Ascension processional litanies should be sung in the streets. The whole populace turned out with great devotion, and their prayers were heard.

Such was their gratitude for the great deliverance, that the bishop determined that no year should pass without these litanies and processions. Certain adjoining dioceses took up this devotion, and so profitable did it become that in time the whole Western Church placed the Rogation Days in the kalendar. And so we have handed down to us from the calamities of that ancient time the devout custom of praying on the Rogation Days for temporal blessings, especially for God's care of the crops and harvest.

MAY 12

*ST. RICTRUDIS, Ab.*

(A.D. 688)

This Saint was born in Gascony, and was married to Adalbald, a noble Frank. In the old baronial days of Europe when young women, and often young men as well, had no voice in their marriage, but submitted to whatever arrangement might be made for them by their families, it was a rare thing to find a loving, united Christian household. The family of this Saint was a conspicuous exception. The old chronicler says, ' Sometimes Rictrudis and her husband might be seen going out, surrounded by their little children,

who played their innocent games about them, and it was with their children that they entered the houses of the sick and needy, to bring consolation and assistance. Their hands were ready to shroud the dead, and often did their words bring repentance and peace to hearts that had been hardened by sin.'

Adalbald was sent on an errand involving State business, and was murdered while on his journey. The saintly widow determined, as soon as her young son Mourontus was educated, to retire into a life of prayer and seclusion. She was about to put this resolution into effect when, to her consternation, she received a message from King Clovis II, requesting her to marry one of his nobles. She staged a dramatic scene in order to find escape from this fate. Inviting the king to be her guest at her castle, she had a magnificent banquet prepared, during which she approached the royal seat, like Esther of old, and kneeling before him, a stately matronly figure, she begged his permission to fulfil her heart's desire. Thinking that she had chosen this as an especially gracious way to ask permission to offer him the grace cup, as was the custom of that day, he replied in the affirmative.

"Sire," she said, producing a nun's veil of black, and throwing it over her head, "to this, my desire and duty call me."

Believing that he had been tricked, Clovis rose in great anger, and left the banquet-hall. But his better self prevailed as he realised her earnestness of spirit, and he not only withdrew his request that she give her hand in marriage, but assisted her by his royal favour to carry out her holy desires.

St. Rictrudis retired to the abbey of Marchiennes, where she was later chosen abbess. She ruled her house with a gentle strength for many years, dying in 688 at the age of seventy-six.



MAY 13

*ST. JOHN THE SILENTIARY, Monk*

(A.D. 558)

In the earlier centuries of the Church, when a bishop found life growing rather more complex than he felt was comfortable, he had an easy way of lightening the burden. He ran away. The monasteries seemed to be full of truant bishops. The Saint of this day was born at Nicopolis in Armenia in 454, and as a young man went into the seclusion of the desert. After ten years he was dragged from his solitude and made Bishop of Colonia. His brother-in-law was governor of the province, and had a reputation for interfering with the affairs of the Church. He met his match in John, however. The bishop carried his case straight to the Emperor and won it.

But the winner of a suit is not always a winner of happiness. The Emperor was on his side, but he did not have to live with the Emperor, while he did have to live in the same town with his brother-in-law, whose position gave him countless opportunities of causing grievous annoyance. So, instead of coming back to Colonia to enjoy the fruits of his victory, he suddenly disappeared, and, search as they might, no trace of him could be found.

He made his way to the monastery of St. Sabbas in Palestine, and that Saint, taking him to be a simple countryman, received him as a lay-brother. For a time he worked at the ordinary tasks about the place, but later, it transpiring that he was possessed of some culinary skill, he was sent to the kitchen, and for years cooked the monks' meals.

His virtue was so marked that after a time St. Sabbas took him to Jerusalem, and insisted that he submit to ordination to the priesthood at the hands of the Patriarch Elias. Poor John was in a predicament. Being already a

bishop, it was not possible to submit to this re-ordination, as it would constitute sacrilege. Nor could he plead what his objection was without exposing himself. He took the patriarch into the secret, and good Elias respected his confidence, and simply reported to Sabbās, “Brother John has revealed to me something that makes it impossible for me to ordain him.”

The abbot burst into tears, thinking that the brother whom he had so loved and trusted had fallen into some heinous crime which made ordination impossible. He spent many nights and days weeping over him, while humble John rejoiced that, at last, what he regarded as his true character, that of a grievous sinner, was attributed to him. But St. Sabbas’ grief was so great that finally, in pity, he told the broken-hearted abbot all.

Returning to the desert, he built a cell against the face of a cliff, not far from the monastery, and there engaged himself in prayer. Shortly after this, the Saracens made an incursion into the country, and the hermits of the neighbourhood fled to the monastery, which was well fortified. John refused to leave his cell. “If it be the will of God not to protect me,” he said, “why should I worry?” And the old legend narrates that all the while the invaders were devastating the country, a lion paced up and down in front of his cell, growling fiercely at anyone who approached. When the enemy retired, the beast went off into the desert, and was seen no more.

St. John died about 588, at the extraordinary age of one hundred and four.

MAY 14

*ST. PACHOMIUS, Ab.*

(A.D. 348)

If the great St. Anthony is to be revered as the founder of the monastic community life in the Catholic Church,

St. Pachomius is to be honoured as the first to draw up such a definite Monastic Rule as is now universally held to be necessary for the governance of religious.

St. Pachomius was the child of heathen parents, and was born in upper Egypt. He was for a time in military service, from which he resigned, and shortly afterwards was baptised. The hermit Palemon was his teacher, but so holy was the disciple that when he founded his monastery at Tabenna some years later, his old master followed him, and became one of his monks. The fame of Pachomius drew many to him, and he was compelled to form numerous other houses, all of which were placed under his Rule.

This Saint combined with his sanctity and consecrated spirit an unusual amount of common sense, and a deep intuitive knowledge of human nature. He not only stimulated his monks to lives of devotion, but he knew when to curb them that their devotion might remain wholesome. He forbade a monk to pray, except in chapel with the rest of the brethren, when he saw in him the danger of spiritual pride, and he required them to eat what was set before them without singularity in fasting.

His sense of humour was keen, and it directed his wisdom in many things, and was found very often in the discipline of the house. The monks worked for their living, and a common task was the weaving of mats out of rushes, which were sold for the support of the monastery. Each monk wove a mat every day. On one occasion a certain brother, moved by a spirit of vanity, wove two mats and put them in a conspicuous place near his cell door, that all might see and praise his diligence. St. Pachomius, passing by, marked the good brother's vanity.

"Ah, my brother," he said, "I see you have been very industrious. What a blessed example you are to all the brethren! It would be too bad should any fail to see how diligently you have worked; so hang these mats about your neck that all may see, until I tell you to take them off."

The poor brother put the mats about his neck and wore them all day long. He wore them in the chapel, and as he sat at his place at the table he could scarcely manage his food for the great mats with which he was cumbered. The monks were required to keep silence in the refectory, but we can easily imagine the covert smiles and sly glances with which they gleefully watched the discomfiture of the poor brother. At last the abbot relieved him of his burden, and he went back to his cell, like the wedding guest, 'a sadder and a wiser man.'

In 348 a plague broke out in the monastery, and carried off a hundred of the brethren. St. Pachomius was one of the first to be attacked. He died in the fifty-seventh year of his age, and in the thirty-fifth of his monastic profession, deeply lamented through all the Christian world.

MAY 15

*ST. DIONYSIA, V.M.*

(ABOUT A.D. 250)

Troas is well known in connection with the life of St. Paul, but it rejoiced in later glories which were added to it when it became the scene of the triumph of many martyrs for Christ. About the year 250, Optimus being pro-consul in that part of the Roman world, a Christian named Nichomachus was brought before his tribunal, and on being suspended by the wrists and tortured, after a time he yielded, crying, "Let me down, I will sacrifice to the gods." He was cut down, but was instantly seized with a fit of madness, and died horribly at the feet of Optimus, foaming at the mouth.

In the crowd which stood looking with terror at the fearful scene, was a young girl named Dionysia, sixteen years of age, who, throwing up her hands in grief, cried

aloud, " O wretched man, for one hour's respite to have to endure endless torment ! "

The pro-consul angrily ordered her to be brought before him, and commanded her to throw upon the idol's shrine the incense which the miserable Nichomachus had not time to cast upon the fire. The shy young girl stood covered with confusion before the angry judge, but bore herself with a lofty courage, refusing to commit the sacrilegious act. She protested that she was a Christian, and would worship Christ alone. After barbarous tortures which failed to shake her constancy, she was beheaded.

MAY 16

*ST. JOHN OF NEPOMUK, B.M.*

(A.D. 1393)

This Saint was a martyr for the sanctity of the confessional. He was born at Nepomuk in Bohemia in 1330. He was educated for the priesthood, and though delicate and frail of body, his courageous spirit, combined with great learning and singular piety, drew attention to him when he was a very young man. He entered the household of the Archbishop of Prague about 1378, and soon acquired wide fame as a powerful preacher.

Wenceslas IV, King of Bohemia, and Emperor at this time, was a man of ferocious brutality. He was married to Joanna, daughter of the Duke of Bavaria, who met with a shocking death in 1387. The king was devoted to hunting, and had many savage wolf-hounds. Two of them shared his bedroom, and one night as the queen happened to raise herself in bed while asleep, they flew upon her and tore her throat ; she was dead before the brutes could be beaten off. Wenceslas then married Sophia of Bavaria, who chose John for her confessor. She was very beautiful, and the king

conceived an insane, though wholly groundless, jealousy concerning her.

Sending for St. John; he tried to make him divulge what the queen had told him in confession. He refused to be satisfied with the Saint's insistence on the queen's innocence, but demanded to know what she had confessed, that he might form his own judgment. When the Saint refused with indignation to commit the sacrilege of breaking the seal of the confessional, he was cast into prison, shockingly tortured on the rack, and finally, when the king saw that no pains could induce him to violate so sacred a confidence, he ordered him to be gagged, and, with his hands tied behind his back, to be flung over the bridge into the River Moldau. This barbarous order was executed on the night of March 30th, 1393.

In later times, a pretty story arose of how that all night long mysterious lights hovered above the water, and on seeking to investigate them, the citizens found the body of the Saint. He is represented in art, standing with his finger upon his lips.

MAY 17

*ST. PASCHAL BAYLON, C.*

(A.D. 1592)

The average reader knows little of the terror of the Calvinists' persecutions in Europe in the sixteenth century. Under the influence of the gloomy and savage genius of John Calvin, wherever they gained power, they instituted a reign of frightfulness. St. Paschal was born in Aragon in 1540. Like so many of the Saints, he was a shepherd in his boyhood. Joining the Franciscans in 1565, he was sent to Paris to attend to some business of his Order at a time when these persecutions were rampant. At Orleans he was recognised as a Catholic and seized by a mob, which

demanding if he believed in the Real Presence of our Lord in the Eucharist. He boldly confessed his Faith, whereupon he was cruelly stoned, and barely escaped with his life. On this occasion he was so seriously injured that he never regained the complete use of his arm.

Proceeding on his journey, he asked for food at the gate of a castle, the owner of which was a Calvinist, who threw him into the castle dungeon, intending to deal with him later, but the lady of the castle, tenderer than her husband, released him. He would in all likelihood have perished at the hands of another mob, had not a peasant concealed him in a stable, and, when the crowd dispersed, put him on his way to Paris.

St. Paschal, for his sufferings and sanctity, has been enrolled among the Church's confessors of the Faith. He died in Valentia in 1592, aged fifty-two years.

#### MAY 18

#### *ST. ERIC OF SWEDEN, K.M.*

(A.D. 1151)

This royal Saint came to the throne of Sweden in 1141. Amongst a hard and barbarous folk, he applied himself with unflagging zeal to the administration of justice and the righting of wrongs. He visited the sick, relieving them with his own hands, and built many churches which he endowed for the worship of God. The savage Finns having invaded his land, he met and defeated them in a great battle, but wept at the sight of the dead bodies of his enemies with which the field was covered. Stirred at the thought of their pagan depravity, he sent Henry, Bishop of Upsala, to carry the Gospel to them, and such was his success that he has been known in history as the apostle of Finland.

But in that rude age of the world his insistence upon

justice could not fail to make many enemies of those whose oppressions he reproved. These malcontents entered into a conspiracy with Magnus, Prince of Denmark, to overthrow St. Eric's kingdom. The holy monarch was hearing Mass the day after the Feast of the Ascension in 1151, when word was brought that the rebels were under arms in great force, and close at hand. He calmly replied, "Let us finish the service," adding with prophetic foresight, "The remainder of the octave I may keep elsewhere."

After Mass he commended his soul to God, and to spare the blood of the citizens who were ready to die for him, making the sign of the Cross, he rode out alone to meet the foe. The conspirators rushed upon him, and he was hewn down from his horse, and his head struck off with a thousand indignities. He was regarded as the chief patron of Sweden until the Protestant revolt of the sixteenth century swept the Catholic Faith from the Scandinavian peninsula. He suffered on May 18th, 1151.

MAY 19

*ST. DUNSTAN, B.C.*

(A.D. 968)

Dunstan was one of the most distinguished figures in the Anglo-Saxon Church, and he was also the first of that long line of English ecclesiastical statesmen, which included Lanfranc and Wolsey, and which ended with the martyr William Laud.

This talented man was born near Glastonbury in 925. The prominence of his family gained for him, when he was a youth, admittance to the royal Court of Wessex. A painful illness turned his thoughts from worldly ambitions to the things of the Kingdom of God. He embraced the monastic life, and for a time lived as a hermit at Glastonbury.



But a brilliant intellect like Dunstan's could not be permitted to remain in obscurity. He was appointed Abbot of Glastonbury, and eventually became Archbishop of Canterbury.

Dunstan's activities were directed chiefly to the reformation of the lives of the clergy, and perhaps no occupant of the throne of Canterbury has ever had so wide and, at the same time, so wholesome an influence in the political life of England. He was the counsellor of many kings, and none went wrong who followed his wise advice.

He was devoted to music, and a charming story is told of the origin of the antiphon, *O Rex gentium*. One night the archbishop dreamed that he was at a royal wedding banquet, listening to the songs of the minstrels, when a youth, clad all in white, came to him and asked why he did not join in the nuptial hymn. He replied, "Because I know neither the words nor the melody." The young harper then sang to him : "O Rex gentium, dominator omnium, propter sedem Majestatis tue, da nobis indulgentiam, Rex Christe, peccatorum, Alleluia." On awaking, he quickly wrote down the words and the music, and taught them to his choristers at Canterbury, and the same splendid composition is sung in our churches to-day.

St. Dunstan is represented in art in the somewhat undignified act of holding the devil by the nose with a pair of tongs. The story was that the devil, being always nervous about the Saint's activities, put his head through the window to see what he was doing. The Saint snatched a pair of red-hot tongs out of the coals on the hearth, and caught the intruder by the nose. Pulling loose, the devil ran post-haste to Tunbridge Wells, and stuck his nose in the springs to cool it off. In this manner, so says the fable, the Wells got their sulphur.

MAY 20

*ST. CELESTINE, B.C.*

(A.D. 1296)

Peter Maroni was a hermit Saint who lived in a monastic retreat in the mountains not far from Rome. In April 1292, Pope Nicholas IV died, and seldom has the Church seen a more angry deadlock than that which resulted when they tried to elect his successor. At last, in the course of the discussion, one of the cardinals mentioned Peter Maroni, quite accidentally it appears. He was known to many for his virtues, and by one of those strange revulsions of mind which occur amongst men, the cry went up, "Peter Maroni for Pope!" He was immediately and unanimously elected, and when the delegation sent to notify him came to his hermitage, they found an aged man, who, blank and bewildered, gazed at them in terror as they fell on their knees before him, and hailed him as the head of the Church. With tears and outcries he protested against being torn from the quiet of his mountain retreat, but the gorgeous papal robes were put on over his shaggy sackcloth, and with a king on each side of him to hold his bridle, and a cardinal prince at his stirrup, he rode into Aquila, and was crowned pope as Celestine V.

Meekness and holiness might make a Saint, but they could not make an efficient pope in those days when the papacy was dominated by a spirit of intrigue and party cunning. Five months convinced the old man, and also the papal Court, that a mistake had been made, and on St. Lucy's Day, December 13th, 1294, he signed his abdication, and hastened with a heart overflowing with joy back to his rude hermitage, to resume his ascetic life.

He was succeeded by Boniface VIII, an unscrupulous ecclesiastical politician, but the disappointment of those

who sighed for the ways of Sion, and longed for better things, made Celestine, all unconsciously, a rallying point for sedition, and Boniface had him arrested and detained in the castle of Fumone. The confinement and ill-treatment soon brought the end, and the simple-hearted old man, longing for the stillness of his mountain-top, and his quiet times of prayer, was released by the gentle hand of death on May 19th, 1296.

MAY 21

*ST. FELIX OF CANTALICE, C.*

(A.D. 1587)

There are Saints whose heroic deeds, appealing to the imagination of the multitude, have made them famous. There are others whose lives have been hidden, who were associated with no great events, but whose simple likeness to our Lord compelled the homage of men wherever they were known. St. Felix of Cantalice was one of these latter. He was born at the foot of the Apennines in the duchy of Spoleto in 1513, being reared in a family which was at the same time poor and full of holiness. His father was said to have been a Saint himself, and to have possessed a strong prophetic power. Once as a little grandson was at the point of death, he blessed him, and said, "Go forth in peace, little Saint, with God's blessing and mine, for a week hence we shall meet again." And it came to pass that, at the end of a week, the old man was also called home to God.

Felix was only a shepherd lad, but, on reading the lives of certain Saints, his heart was set on fire with the desire to serve God in Holy Religion. He was received as a lay-brother by the Capuchin friars, and he speedily developed that profound spirit of thankfulness, the absence of which Dr. Liddon once said was responsible for the fact that there

were so few Saints in the world. The words '*Deo gratias*' (Thanks be to God)' were continually on his lips. It is narrated that, walking one day outside the city gate, he came upon two gentlemen in a secluded place, fighting a duel. Rushing between them, at the risk of serious injury, he beat down their swords, crying, "*Deo gratias*, my brethren, say *Deo gratias*, each of you !" Astounded at this unprecedented interruption, they drew back too surprised to know what to do next. Finally, each of them repeated the sacred words, upon which the Saint said, "Now your battle is done ; let me hear what your quarrel is about and I will reconcile you." The duel was over some silly punctilio of so-called honour, and the Saint had no difficulty in reconciling them, and sending them away friends.

When in his walks he came upon little children, playing amongst the flowers or at their innocent games, he would point up to the blue sky, reminding them of the Source of all that was sweet and beautiful in life, and would cry, "*Deo gratias !*" They got to know him well, for he had that simplicity of heart which always establishes a comradeship of love with children. When they saw him coming they would run to meet him crying, "*Deo gratias*, Brother Felix, *Deo gratias !*" Then the old man's face would light up with a smile, and his eyes would fill with happy tears, as he would exclaim, "Yes, my dear children, *Deo gratias*, God bless you all !"

For many years his occupation was that of begging from door to door for food and alms for the monastery and the poor. On his return, he would go into the church, and prostrating himself before the Blessed Sacrament, would cry, "Lord, I commend to Thee my poor people ; I commend to Thee the kind hearts who are our benefactors. Great God, have mercy on them all."

In 1587 he died in great peace, breathing out his happy soul to God with a last earthly act of thanksgiving.

MAY 22

*ST. IVO, B.C.*

(A.D. 1353)

This Saint combined great intellectual gifts and wide learning with deep sanctity. He was a lawyer, and instead of using his profession to make money and fame, he devoted his talents to the protection of the poor. Let any poor man be oppressed and the adversary found himself immediately involved in the toils of a relentless litigation from which Ivo did not allow him to escape until he had restored the uttermost farthing to the man whom he had despoiled.

In times of scarcity, it was his custom to distribute his corn to the poor, not stopping to ask whether there would be enough for his next meal. On one occasion a friend begged him to save his corn until the price advanced. "I did so," said the friend, "and gained twenty per cent. in a few months." "That is nothing," replied Ivo shrewdly; "you are not a good business man. I gave mine to the poor, and gained an hundredfold immediately." He knew the reward of those who, giving to the poor, lend to the Lord.

His happy death occurred in 1353, in the fiftieth year of his age.

MAY 23

*ST. JULIA, V.M.*

(5TH CENTURY)

'Whose service is perfect freedom,' is a clause from one of the most ancient prayers of the Church, referring to the service of God; and it has rarely been more beautifully illustrated than in the history of St. Julia of Carthage.

When the city was taken by the Vandals under Genseric, in 439, she was sold as a slave to Eusebius, a pagan Syrian merchant, who treated her with all respect and allowed her liberty to practise her Faith without let or hindrance.

On one occasion, he took her with him on a voyage to Gaul. Stopping to trade in the island of Corsica, her master went ashore to join in a pagan festival. Julia refused to attend it, and made no secret of her attitude towards the idolatrous proceeding. The chief of the islanders was greatly incensed, and tried to purchase her in order to apply to her the cruel pressure, used in such cases, to force her to sacrifice to his gods. The Syrian valued and respected the girl, and would not part with her. Felix, the Corsican chief, while Eusebius was sleeping off the debauch which was incident to the festival, seized the girl, offering her her liberty if she would renounce her Faith.

"No freedom can be fuller and sweeter," replied the girl, "than the freedom to love and to serve Jesus Christ."

Felix, feeling himself derided by her undaunted courage, delivered her to the executioners, with orders that she be tortured until she relented, and that if she held fast her Faith, she should be hanged on a cross. Although this sentence was carried out with all possible barbarity, not once did the blessed martyr flinch from her invincible adherence to the love and service of her Lord.

Certain monks from the adjacent island of Gorgona secured her body, and gave it devout burial in their church. In 763, Desiderius, the king of the Lombards, had the body of the martyr removed to Brescia, where a splendid church was erected to receive it. Her memory is celebrated at Brescia with great devotion.

MAY 24

ST. VINCENT OF LERINS, C.  
(ABOUT A.D. 450)

St. Vincent was a gentleman of Gaul, well educated, and for a time he held a commission in the Roman army. Realising the vanity of worldly things, he gave up his military career, and entered the monastery of St. Honoratus at Lerins, which was the monastic capital of Provence. This monastery produced numerous Saints and defenders of the Faith, men like St. Honoratus and St. Hilary of Arles, who did stout battle for the Nicene truth, amid the turmoil of the arena.

St. Vincent's life lay in quieter walks. He seems to have lived and died amid the green slopes of his little island, set in the sapphire waters of the Mediterranean. But he was not unmindful of the conflicts which were going on through all the Christian world between the true Faith and the many subtle errors that were evolved by heretics in 'the mad pride of their intellectuality.' While others struggled amid the dust of the arena, he was busy with prayers and pen amid the solitudes of Lerins.

His chief claim upon the gratitude of the Church is on account of his brief treatise, known as the *Commonitorium*, which was designed to be a corrective of the heresies of his day. In it he enunciated the principles accepted by the whole Church by which the truth was to be differentiated from error. In this little book is found the widely known expression, *Quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omnibus creditum est*, – that is to say, whatever has been believed everywhere, always, by everyone, in the Church, is to be taken for the right Faith. 'For this,' he added, 'is truly and properly Catholic.' All controverted points of Faith must be subjected, therefore, to the test of universality, antiquity, and general consent.

The *Commonitorium* was written in 434, three years after the Council of Ephesus had condemned Nestorianism, which denied the eternity of God the Son, and that Blessed Mary's Child was God. Pelagianism was still rife, with its assertions that man, of his own power and will could gain salvation without the interposition of the grace of God. It was these two heresies, or variants of them, which St. Vincent had in mind especially in the *Commonitorium*, but it was, in reality, what he declared it to be, namely a preservative 'against the profane novelties of all heretics.'

Little is known of this Saint's private life. No date is given for either his birth or death, but he must have died before the year 450.

MAY 25

*ST. MARY MAGDALENE OF PAZZI, V.*

(A.D. 1607)

For Christians who are troubled with evil thoughts, the life of this holy woman offers consolation. Evil thoughts are not in themselves sinful unless we willingly entertain them. God permits us to be assaulted by them, but we need not yield to them.

St. Mary was a daughter of the illustrious Florentine house of Pazzi. Her father wished to arrange a brilliant marriage for his daughter, but yielded to her ardent desire for the Religious Life. When she was eighteen years old, she entered the Order of Mount Carmel, taking the name of Mary Magdalene.

A year after her profession, God permitted a fiery trial to befall her. As warning of the approaching ordeal, the Saint saw in a vision a dismal swamp filled with most repulsive forms. A week later began the fearful trial which was to last for five years. The presence of God seemed withdrawn from His servant, while revolting and evil



imaginations forced themselves upon her mind. Throughout the conflict, St. Mary held fast to God, crying continually, "Thy will, Thy will be done, O my God, but suffer me not to fall from Thee." The long trial ceased suddenly. As the *Te Deum* was being chanted in choir, the dark shadow passed from her soul. "Rejoice with me, my mother, the storm is passed," she announced to the prioress.

Realising the protection afforded to the soul by the safeguards of the Religious Life, St. Mary would sometimes kiss the walls of her convent which sheltered her from the world. When in her last sickness the holy woman was urged to pray for alleviation of her sufferings, she heroically replied, "Let the will of God be done." She died in 1607.

#### MAY 26

#### *ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, B.C.* (A.D. 605)

We recall how eagerly St. Gregory the Great (see March 12th) longed to carry the Gospel to Britain. What he himself could not do, he achieved through one of his faithful colleagues. He had founded the monastery of St. Andrew on the Cœlian Hill in Rome, and in 596 Augustine was its prior.

Nothing is known of St. Augustine until in 596 he started out with his forty Benedictine brethren to bring England to the Faith. They visited Lerins on their journey, and it seems that it was there that they received such terrifying accounts of the savage inhabitants of Britain that Augustine returned to Rome to ask the pope to allow them to abandon the errand. Instead of entertaining their request, the pope sent him back with words of encouragement which stimulated them to proceed.

The party landed at Ebbsfleet in Kent. They were graciously received by King Ethelbert, whose wife, Queen Bertha, was a Christian, and he assigned them a place of residence at Canterbury, with permission to teach the Faith to the Saxons. The simplicity of the lives of the missionaries, and the sweetness of their teaching, made a profound impression on the heathen Saxons, and in a brief time the king himself sought baptism at the hands of Augustine.

The Saint then proceeded to Arles, where he received episcopal consecration at the hands of Virgilius, archbishop of that city. This was some time before October 597. Returning without delay to his labours, he found that in his absence, his fellow-missionaries had wrought so powerfully on the people that at Christmastide of that year more than ten thousand presented themselves for baptism. This Sacrament was administered to them in the Thames, at the mouth of the Medway.

The king devoted himself to the progress of the mission, giving St. Augustine the Church of St. Martin at Canterbury, which was already a Christian shrine, patronised by Queen Bertha. The royal palace at Canterbury was assigned to the monks for a monastery, and the Saint laid the foundations of the first Christ Church, destined to develop into the noble cathedral, which for nearly a thousand years has been England's premier metropolitan church. Ethelbert also gave him the site of an old heathen temple, where he consecrated the abbey which, though dedicated to St. Peter and St. Paul, became, under the Saint's own name, one of the greatest and most revered monastic foundations in Christendom.

It would be an error to suppose that when St. Augustine came to England Christianity was wholly extinct. Under the savage Saxon persecutions of a century and a half, the Church was well nigh stamped out, but far back in the mountains of the west, British bishops still ruled their sadly depleted flocks. A conference was arranged with these

bishops of the old British Church on the banks of the Severn, in the borders of Worcestershire. Perhaps St. Augustine met his brother bishops in too imperious a fashion, making too many demands upon them in respect to their attitude towards the authority and practices of Rome. But who will presume to sit in judgment on these Saints? In any case, the British refused to work with the new missionaries, and, isolated from the rest of Christendom, not long after disappeared from history. The gentle Bede, historian of the Saxon Church, assumes that it was a divine judgment upon them for their refusal to co-operate with the Saxon Church, as they had during the previous generations contemptuously refused to seek the conversion of the Saxon people. It is significant that the Angles and Saxons in Britain, alone amongst the German tribes which invaded the Roman Empire, were not converted to Christianity by the people whom they conquered.

St. Gregory died in 605, and two months later St. Augustine followed him to the rest prepared for the faithful servants of the kingdom. The apostle of the English was buried in the unfinished church of his monastery.

MAY 27

*THE VENERABLE BEDE, C.*

(A.D. 735)

This distinguished English Saint was one of the most learned men of his time. He wrote the first history of England, and practically all we know of the early days of the Anglo-Saxons is derived from his *Ecclesiastical History*.

He was the head-master of a monastic school of six hundred youths at Jarrow. He was the first to translate the Bible into English, and when death approached him in 735, he was engaged in dictating his translation of the last

chapter of the Gospel of St. John. It was the evening of Ascension Day, and the young lad who acted as his secretary said to him, seeing how weak and ill he was, "Master, there is one sentence left unwritten." "Write quickly, my son," replied the old man, as he bent himself to the task of the translation. Presently the boy said, "Father, it is finished." "Thou hast said truly," replied the Saint, "it is finished, *consummatum est*. Now lift me up, and turn my face towards the place in the chapel where I have so long prayed to our God, and let me call once more upon Him."

The youth lifted him up so that from the window of his cell he could see into the choir where he had prayed daily for sixty years. He cried, "Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost," and as the Name of the Blessed Spirit left his lips, his soul departed.

His body lies in the cathedral at Durham. Anciently, the faithful were permitted to visit his tomb and pay honour to the illustrious son of the Church. Now, unhappily, his tomb can be seen only by paying for the privilege.

MAY 28

*BLESSED GIZUR OF SKALHOLT, B.C.*  
(A.D. 1118)

It was not until comparatively recent times that Christianity was introduced into America, yet our holy religion had flourished in one corner of the vast western hemisphere for nearly five hundred years before the epochal voyage of Columbus. The far northern island of Iceland was this happy exception. Blessed Gizur, who was consecrated in 1082, was the second bishop of the Icelandic Church. He fixed his see at Skalholt, a beautiful farm which he inherited from his mother.

Under his wise government the Church prospered to such an extent that he divided the island into two dioceses, retaining Skalholt, the southern diocese, for his own. During his later years blessed Gizur was a great sufferer. When asked what he would like his friends to ask of God for him, the holy bishop replied, "Not that my pains may be loosed, for I am ready to bear the chastisement of the Lord." Blessed Gizur died in the year 1118, sincerely lamented throughout Iceland.

MAY 29

*ST. SISINNIUS, M.*

(A.D. 397)

High amongst the passes of Tyrol, where the river Roca precipitates its foaming torrent in leaping cascades down the mountain-side, may be found the little village of Sanzeno where repose the sacred relics of this Saint who first bore the light of Christ into the savage fastnesses of the Tyrolean Alps, nearly sixteen hundred years ago.

St. Sisinnius was a Cappadocian, who came to Milan during the reign of St. Ambrose, and placed his services at the disposal of that Saint. He was quite evidently a man of a courageous and consecrated pioneer spirit, and St. Ambrose sent him to his friend Vigilius, the Bishop of Trent, who despatched him, together with two companions, Martyrius and Alexander, on the most desperate errand in his vast mountain jurisdiction, namely, to preach the Faith to the savage mountaineers who kept their flocks among the almost inaccessible ranges of the Dolomites.

Sisinnius used an alpine horn to attract the people to whom he would speak. Selecting some central location where an open glade offered its green sward for a gathering place, he would wind his horn, the mellow notes of which sounded afar through the mountains, echoing from range

to range. And as the people gathered he would speak to them of Christ, of His love for sinners, of the great work of Redemption which He wrought in His Passion, and of the rest which remaineth for the people of God.

Not a few converts were secured, but the heathen priests, angered at this interference with the practice of their superstitions, stirred up the people, and on the occasion of one of their festivals, they fell upon St. Sisinnius with their axes, and slew him. Martyrius was in hiding in a rose-bush, and was betrayed by a young girl. In a few moments both he and Alexander had followed their consecrated leader in the glory of martyrdom.

The mountaineers then made a funeral pyre of fragrant pine boughs, upon which the bodies of the martyrs were consigned to the purifying flames.

MAY 30

*ST. JOAN OF ARC, V.M.*  
(A.D. 1431)

Joan of Arc was born on the feast of the Epiphany, 1412, at Domremy in France. Her country at this period had been sadly devastated by hostile armies, and her people were ground under the heel of the invader. The English and the Burgundians held the land in their grip, Paris had fallen to the foe, and the Dauphin could not be crowned at Rheims.

When Joan was about thirteen years old, being no different from the other children in her village, except that she was more devout, she was surprised to hear one day, out of a mist which hung over the orchard, voices calling to her, telling her that she must go and deliver France. She knew not what this meant, but after hearing them again and again, she became convinced that it was a call to some

heaven-sent vocation, she knew not what, and that it involved the devotion of her life to France. She went to the nearest fortified town, and told the commandant of her mission. She was laughed at for her pains, but her persistence brought reward, and in 1428 she was taken before the Dauphin. In those days men believed that heaven was concerned with the things of earth, and they believed in signs from on high. They heard her story, and they believed in her. In a few weeks this ignorant young peasant girl from Domremy rode at the head of the armies of France, under a banner bearing the figure of the Crucified, and such was the spirit which her presence infused into the soldiery, that the war became a crusade.

Orleans was being slowly starved to death by the English siege, but under the leadership of this frail girl, and in the power of her prayers, the enemies' ranks were shattered, and the standards of France were planted triumphant upon the walls. An English soldier hurled an evil epithet at her, but riding down upon him, she cried, "You call me harlot, but I have great pity on your soul." When the victory was complete, and her soldiers shouting in triumph, she knelt upon the field, weeping and praying for the souls of her enemies.

Victory after victory was gained, and in July 1429, Charles the Dauphin was crowned king of France in liberated Rheims. But made over-confident by victory, the French now ignored Joan's counsel. Charles began to depend on the arm of flesh, with the result that within a few months all the gains were swept away. Joan was taken prisoner by the Burgundians at Compiègne in May 1431, and with her capture began the most shameless course of treachery that ever stained the annals of France and England. She was sold to the English, a travesty of a trial for heresy and witchcraft was gone through with, and this young girl, who at eighteen years of age had struck terror to the hearts of the two finest armies in Europe, was

condemned to perish at the stake. Her treatment was marked with every refinement of moral and physical cruelty. For a long time she was denied even the Sacraments, but in the strength of her righteousness she faced her persecutors without a tremor of fear. On the scaffold she asked for a cross. A soldier tied together two sticks and gave it to her. Kissing it, and holding it fast to her breast, she died amidst the flames, crying, "Jesus, Jesus !"

Cardinal Beaufort, the Bishop of Winchester, was amongst the foremost of those who laboured for her destruction. It was a significant work of reparation that the first statue to be erected to her in England, after her canonisation, was in Winchester Cathedral.

MAY 31

*ST. PETRONILLA, V.*

(1ST CENTURY)

Although very little is known about this Saint, she seems to have made a deep impression on the early Church by her holiness, not to speak of a certain shrewdness which characterised her. She is mentioned by several of the early Fathers of the Church, among them being St. Clement of Alexandria, who died about 215, St. Jerome, and others.

There was a tradition that she was a daughter of St. Peter, her name, of course, being the feminine diminutive of Peter ; but this may mean only that she was his child in the Faith. One of the great cemeteries of Rome was named after her.

Another tradition, interesting but perhaps not authentic, says that she was a cripple, and that when Simon Magus met St. Peter in Rome he taunted him with not being able to heal his own daughter, though he claimed to be able to work miracles in the Name of Christ. The



apostle replied, "It is expedient for her to be as she is ; nevertheless, to show the power of God, she shall rise and walk," which the maiden did immediately.

If the old stories of her are to be trusted, she had a shrewd tongue, and was quite capable of taking care of herself in a verbal battle. A certain Count Flaccus fell in love with her, and sent some of his soldiers to ask her hand in marriage. She sent them flying with sarcasms. "If he wants to marry me," she said, "does he think he will get very far by sending to me rough soldiers to woo me instead of a respectable matron, and not giving me a decent time in which to consider it ?" But before Flaccus could find the respectable matron, St. Petronilla was dead.

JUNE 1

*THE MARTYRS OF SANDOMIR*

(A.D. 1260)

THE latter half of the thirteenth century was a time of anguish and rebuke for the Christians of eastern Europe. The pagan Tartars had overrun Russia, and their hordes were impinging upon all the countries bordering on that region. In the town of Sandomir in Poland there was a convent inhabited by a group of devout sons of the great Spanish founder, St. Dominic. Wild rumours were running through the country concerning the atrocities of the invaders, whose chief delight was to put to the torture the Christians who had the unhappy experience of falling into their hands. However, they had not approached very near to Sandomir, and while grieving for their brethren, who in other places had suffered at the hands of the pagans, the friars were in no immediate alarm concerning their own safety.

On the night of June 2nd the monks met as usual in the refectory for their evening refreshment, at which time it was the custom to read the martyrology of the day. One of the novices, who had been assigned to read, opened the book in which were inscribed the names of those who were to be commemorated, and read out solemnly, "The Forty-nine Martyrs of Sandomir." The brethren started from their places in amazement, and the young brother could give no explanation of this strange slip of the tongue, as it seemed.

But the prior, a holy man, with a vision of God's possible purpose for His people, took it as a prophecy, and directed the household to repair to the chapel and prepare themselves by prayer and supplication for whatever the will of God might hold for them. They had not been praying

long when the loud shouts of a multitude were heard, and the clash of steel told of the approach of armed men. In a few moments the enemy broke down the gates, and forty-nine of the holy company sealed their testimony to the Faith of Christ in their blood, in fulfilment of the unconscious prophecy of the young novice. This occurred in the year 1260.

JUNE 2

*ST. POTHINUS AND ST. BLANDINA, MM.*

(A.D. 177)

Pothinus was Bishop of Lyons in France, and suffered a cruel martyrdom in the year 177. He was above ninety years old, and so weak and infirm that he could hardly stand, but his eagerness to witness for the love of Christ gave him unearthly strength.

The summer of that year was a glorious one for the Christians of Lyons, and their aged bishop was among the first to give them the example of how to witness a good confession for the Blessed Lord. He was condemned before the Roman judge, and given over to the brutality of the mob. Beaten and dragged through the streets, he died shortly after being returned to his prison.

Among those who suffered with the noble bishop was a young girl named Blandina. She was born in no high station, for she was a little slave-maid ; and yet the Church in every part of the world for eighteen hundred years has delighted to honour her above the honour which it gives to its most gifted sons. She was subjected to frightful tortures, but God gave her strength through it all to endure for love of her Saviour. She was fastened to a pillar to be devoured by wild beasts which were let loose upon her ; but none of them would touch her. Daily she was led into the amphitheatre to witness the tortures of her fellow-Christians,

but the awful ordeal did not shake her resolution. On the contrary, like a courageous mother, she comforted and encouraged them, and rejoiced when their steadfastness to the end secured for them the crown. She was the last to die. She was scourged, torn by beasts, burned with hot irons, and finally was wrapped in a net and exposed to a wild bull which tossed and gored her again and again, until death brought the reward of the heavenly diadem.

JUNE 3

*ST. CLOTHILDA, QUEEN*  
(ABOUT A.D. 540)

Toward the close of the fifth century, the outlook for the Catholic Faith was extremely dark. There was not an orthodox prince in Christendom. In the East, the Emperor Anastasius was suspected of inclining to Eutychianism. In the West, the Gothic, Burgundian, and Vandal chieftains were Arians. As of old, in the days of Esther and Judith, so now by the hand of a woman, God brought deliverance.

The gentle Burgundian princess, Clothilda, reared in the Catholic faith, was married to Clovis, a heathen, the king of the powerful Frankish nation. Her goodness and sweetness won the heart of her fierce husband, and inclined him to accept her religion. He yielded to her persuasions that their first child, the boy who would wear his crown, should be baptised, and in a few months the infant prince was dead. Reluctantly he consented to the baptism of his second son, who shortly afterwards was seized with a dangerous illness. Clovis was wild with grief and rage. "This comes of your holy water," he said. But the queen besieged heaven with her prayers, and the boy's life was spared.

The king came to no definite conclusion, however, until

engaged in battle with the Alemanni on the field of Tolbiac. The Franks were worsted and were fleeing from the field. In that moment of despair, Clovis remembered his loved wife and her God. Raising his hands to heaven, he vowed that if that God would give him the victory, he would be baptised a Christian. The tide of battle turned, the Alemanni were routed, and victory remained with the royal convert.

It was not long before he was baptised by St. Remigius, Bishop of Rheims. As the king stood at the font, the bishop said, "Fierce Sicambrian, gently bow thy neck ; burn what thou has adored, and adore what thou hast burned." Three thousand Franks followed their king into the Church. During the subsequent instruction, the bishop dwelt upon the sad events of the Passion, whereupon Clovis, starting from his place, with his hand on his sword cried, "Had I and my Franks been there they had not dared to do it."

This saintly queen, whose holy life brought a nation to the feet of Christ, died about 540.

#### JUNE 4

*ST. FRANCIS CARACCILO, Ab.*

(A.D. 1608)

In the year 1588 a devout Genoese, John Augustine Adorno, formed the design of founding a new religious brotherhood to be devoted to the honour of the Blessed Sacrament. He wished to secure as coadjutor a certain pious man named Ascanio Caracciolo, and wrote him a letter telling of his plans. By some mistake, with which one can be sure the Holy Spirit had much to do, this letter was delivered to another Caracciolo. This young man was no less devout than his namesake, and he was overwhelmed at this invitation which came to him like a bolt

from the blue. Sure that God's hand was in it, he hastened to ally himself with the holy enterprise. The new Order was approved by the Church authorities, and after the death of Adorno, Caracciolo became the Superior.

Of such humility and sanctity was he that when he passed through the villages on his travels amongst the houses of his Order, the people used to crowd about him, kissing his hands and the hem of his garment, much to the distress of the Saint, who regarded himself as the most worthless of God's servants. Falling on his knees, he would take a crucifix from his bosom, and holding it up, cry with tears, "Do not consider me, a sinner, but look, look on Him!" He would then preach to them on the goodness and love of God with a fervour which stirred all hearts.

He travelled much through Italy and Spain, founding houses of his Order, the Congregation of Regular Clerks Minor, spreading far and wide the contagious warmth of his love for God and for his fellow-men. He died in the Abruzzi in 1608, in the prime of his career, being forty-five years of age. As he lay dying, he kept repeating the words, "Lord Jesus, how good Thou art! O Paradise, Paradise!"

JUNE 5

*ST. BONIFACE, B.M.*

(A.D. 755)

This Saint was one of the many missionaries who went forth from the British Isles for the conversion of northern Europe. He was born at Crediton in Devonshire in 680. He entered the monastery of Exminster, and thrilled, as was all England, with the accounts of the great missionary work that was being done in Frisia – modern Holland and Belgium – he was given permission to evangelise the German people. He began with Bavaria and Thuringia, and at

length made his headquarters in Hesse and Saxony. With his own hands, he cut down an ancient oak which had for centuries been sacred to Thor. The assembled pagans looked on in terror at the sacrilegious work, expecting swift and awful vengeance to fall upon the head of the daring monk. But they soon realised that the Thunderer was unable to avenge the insult done to his honour, and turning their backs upon the old gods, they bowed their necks to the gentle yoke of Christ.

When seventy-five years old, St. Boniface, leaving the well settled parts of Germany, sailed down the Rhine to preach to the heathen Frisians who lived on the low shores of what is now Holland. Here he repeated his triumphs of spiritual conquest, but not without arousing the rage of the heathen. On the eve of Pentecost, 755, he was preparing to confirm a number of newly baptised converts, when he was set upon by the heathen rabble. Realising that the day of his release had come, he took a volume of the Gospels, and making it a pillow for his head, awaited the blow which gave him the crown of martyrdom. He was slain near Dockurn on the banks of the River Borne. Thirty-seven of his disciples were the companions of his passion, a goodly company to come up to the gates of heaven with the laurel wreath of martyrdom on their brows.

JUNE 6

*ST. NORBERT, Ab.*

(A.D. 1134)

Norbert was a worldly courtier in the court of the Emperor Henry IV. Converted by a special interposition of Providence, he gave himself to a life of austerity and devotion to the poor. One night while praying in a ruined chapel, he saw a vision of a long procession of white-robed men, with cross and tapers, sweep through the sanctuary,

and out over the meadows, winding away out of sight among the trees. This was a sign to him that he was to found a religious Order, and he became the first Abbot of the Premonstratensians, the branch of the Augustinians whose monasteries covered the land of England in the days of the Faith.

His sincerity and truth recommended him to all men, and he was made Archbishop of Magdeburg in Germany. This preferment brought him again in contact with the world, but he never changed his mode of life. Amidst the luxury of the Court, he was always the simple, austere monk. He died in 1134, and was buried in the church of his Order, in his see city.

JUNE 7

*ST. PAUL OF CONSTANTINOPLE, M.*

(A.D. 350)

When the great Council of Nicæa, at which the Godhead of our Lord Jesus Christ was set forth, met in 325, St. Metrophanes, the aged Patriarch of Constantinople, lay a-dying. One of his clergy, Alexander by name, represented him at the Council, and he had with him a little page named Paul. The Fathers of the Council, at the request of the emperor, went to see the dying patriarch, who told them that Alexander should succeed him, and then to their surprise he pointed out the little page, who, he said, should follow Alexander in the high office whenever he should lay down the burden of his duties. And so it came to pass.

In 336, ten years after the Council, Paul, although only twenty-two years old, was chosen Patriarch of Constantinople by the orthodox Christians. But he fell on evil times, and along with St. Athanasius, the great Bishop of Alexandria, he suffered many things for the Faith, being



exiled again and again. He was in the thick of the great battle which was fought through many years for the purity of the Faith respecting the Incarnation of God, and finally, in the year 350, he was arrested and sent into Armenia, where, after a week's starvation, he was strangled in his prison.

His martyrdom was the temporary triumph of Arianism, which was the earliest form of the heresy which we to-day are called upon to combat as Unitarianism. Macedonius, his heretical rival for the patriarchate, now took possession of the see, and his enthronement was followed by the massacre of three thousand of the adherents of St. Paul. Such were the tribulations of those who in the early centuries sought to keep the Faith.

JUNE 8

ST. MÉDARD, C.

(A.D. 545)

This saint was a Frenchman, and was Bishop of Noyon in the sixth century. One wonders if Victor Hugo got his story of the bishop and the candlesticks in *Les Misérables*, from the Acts of St. Médard. Once a thief broke into his garden, and was making off with a quantity of grapes, when he was seized by the neighbours and brought before the bishop. Seeing the poor wretch's poverty and terror, the Saint cried, "Let the poor man loose; I gave him the grapes."

In art this Saint is represented with an eagle above his head, in reference to a charming old legend that one day, while on an errand of mercy, he was overtaken by a great storm of rain, when an eagle flew from a neighbouring height, and hovered over him, protecting him from the fierce rain with the spread of its wings. St. Médard died at Noyon in 545.

JUNE 9

*ST. COLUMBA, Ab.*

(A.D. 597)

St. Columba, known to history as the 'Dove of the North,' was born in Ireland.

On one occasion, while visiting his old master, Finnian, he secretly made a copy of his psalter. Finnian claimed it, and the dispute between these two good men grew so sharp that it was referred to King Dermott for judgment. Dermott gave the famous judgment, 'To every cow belongs her calf, to every book its copy.'

Chafing under what he thought to be an injustice, Columba, who was a hot-headed young Irishman, fomented a war, in which many were slain. Struck with horror at his act, he sought counsel of a holy priest, who imposed upon him as a penance the duty of carrying the Gospel to the heathen inhabitants of the country now called Scotland. He repaired thither with a band of monks, and founded the famous island sanctuary of Iona.

From this as a centre, he and his companions preached throughout Scotland with wonderful effect, and when he died in 597, practically the whole country was Christian. Iona was for centuries a fountain-head of missionary zeal, and not only the adjoining land of Scotland, but much of north England, was evangelised by the monks who went forth from this shrine of St. Columba.

JUNE 10

*ST. MARGARET, QUEEN.*

(A.D. 1093)

When William of Normandy triumphed at Senlac, the members of the old Saxon royal house feared for their lives

and fled for safety to the neighbouring kingdom of Scotland. Malcolm III, the ruler of that country, received the refugees hospitably, and chivalrously refused to surrender them in response to William's demand. There was probably a romantic reason for this refusal, for in 1070, four years after the Conquest, Malcolm married the Princess Margaret, one of his royal guests. This marriage was a most fortunate one for both Malcolm and Scotland. The influence of the saintly queen over her rough, barbarous husband was marked, and he became one of Scotland's best kings. This was the same Malcolm who appears in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*.

An ancient writer tells us that 'she excited the king to works of justice, mercy, alms-deeds, and other virtues. For he, seeing that Christ dwelt in the heart of his queen, was always willing to follow her advice.'

The castle of Alnwick in Northumberland, which belonged to the Scottish king, had been taken by William Rufus of England, and the garrison massacred. Malcolm with his two sons, Edward and Edgar, besieged the castle with such vigour that the Normans offered to surrender, but declared that they would deliver the keys to no one but to the king himself. Malcolm, suspecting nothing, advanced to receive them when they were presented to him on the point of a spear by a soldier. But as he reached out his hand, the soldier drove the point of the spear into his eye, killing him. Prince Edward being also slain, the siege was raised, and the young prince, Edgar, came home as his mother lay dying, ignorant of the terrible blow that had fallen. She asked after her husband and son. "They are well," replied Edgar, fearing the effect of the news on his mother, should he tell her the truth. But she was not deceived, for she seemed to have had some strange premonition that a great calamity was to befall Scotland and her family. Lifting up her hands to heaven she cried, "I thank Thee, Almighty God, that in sending me so

great an affliction in the last hour of my life, Thou wouldest purify me from my sins." Praying thus, her happy release came on November 16th, 1093. Her feast was transferred to June 10th by Pope Innocent XII in 1693.

JUNE 11

*ST. BARNABAS, Ap. M.*

(A.D. 53)

This Saint was a native of Cyprus, a Levite, and one of our Lord's earliest disciples. Many of the early Fathers assert that he was one of the Seventy Evangelists (St. Luke, x., 1.). He seems to have been a fellow-student of Saul of Tarsus in the school of Gamaliel, and it was he who, upon St. Paul's conversion, introduced his old schoolmate to the Apostles, as St. Luke narrates in Acts ix. When word came to Jerusalem that the Faith was being preached by certain converts in Antioch, the brethren hastened to send St. Barnabas to that city to superintend this work of evangelisation. St. Luke tells us that much people were taught, and there were many converts.

The most striking thing about this Saint is that his missionary ministry, as well as that of St. Paul, arose as the product of a pure work of prayer at Antioch. After Barnabas and Saul 'had fulfilled their ministry,' we are told that a special campaign of prayer was inaugurated at Antioch. 'They ministered unto the Lord and fasted,' St. Luke tells us. The word 'ministered,' in the Greek original, means 'celebrated the Liturgy,' that is, they were in a kind of retreat, celebrating the Holy Mysteries of the Eucharist daily, and praying. Suddenly in the midst of this, 'the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.' And thus, out of a pure work of prayer, arose the great missionary

labours of St. Paul and St. Barnabas. This is, perhaps, the most outstanding instance in the history of the Apostolic Church of the results of prayer, as distinguished from external works. It should be a powerful example and incentive to us in these days of hectic activity in the Church.

St. Barnabas was St. John Mark's uncle, and the two apostles took him with them on their missionary journey to Cyprus, St. Barnabas' native country. But he left them in Pamphylia, and the two apostles, differing as to the measure of blame that should be given him, had so sharp a contention about it that they 'departed asunder, one from the other,' and St. Barnabas, taking St. Mark with him, sailed home to Cyprus.

It is not for us to attempt to parcel out the blame when such an unhappy division between Saints occurs. It is enough that St. Luke, writing undoubtedly under the influence of St. Paul, many years afterward, perhaps about A.D. 63, ten years after St. Barnabas' death, says of the latter, 'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith.' (Acts xi.)

We do not know in what part of the world St. Barnabas' subsequent ministry lay. There is an old, but quite impossible, tradition that he went to Italy, and became the first Bishop of Milan. A more trustworthy tradition is that he spent his life evangelising his own island country, Cyprus, and that he suffered martyrdom there about the year 53 at the hands of the Jews.

JUNE 12

*ST. LEO III, B.C.*  
(A.D. 816)

St. Leo was a native of Rome, and was educated to an ecclesiastical life. He was made Pope in 798, but not

without bitter opposition. But there was little that was subtle or baffling about such opposition in those rude times. A man generally knew where his enemies stood. So it was in this case. During a solemn procession in the streets of Rome on St. George's Day, 799, the pope was set upon by a band of armed men, who, with a view to mutilating him so that he would be disqualified from being pope, threw him from his horse, and tried, unsuccessfully, to put out his eyes. Dragging him off, they threw him into prison, from which he escaped.

Hastening across the Alps to Charlemagne, Leo gained his support, and returned in triumph, accompanied by the king whom he crowned as Roman Emperor in St. Peter's on Christmas Day, in the year 800.

St. Leo's most trying problem at one time was concerning the insertion in the Nicene Creed of the words, 'and from the Son,' after the words, 'proceedeth from the Father,' in the declaration concerning the Holy Ghost. These words had first been authorised by a Council at Toledo in Spain in 589. There was no question whatever about the truth of the words, but there was a grave question as to the right of a mere provincial council to insert anything whatever into the Creed. They had now for a long time been used in Spain and France, but never in Rome. The perplexity was a twofold one. Could the pope, without the approval of an Œcumenical Council, add any words at all to the Creed? Leo said, "No." But, since they had for many generations been used in certain regions, if they were now ordered to be omitted, would it not give the impression that the words were heretical, which, of course, they were not?

This was the dilemma, and the pope was not of a mind to be impaled on either horn of it. He would do nothing; and so the French and the Spaniards went on using the insertion, while Leo made a silent protest by having the Nicene Creed, without the controverted words, inscribed on two tablets, one gold and one silver, the one in Latin and

the other in Greek, and hung up in St. Peter's. But eventually, the words appeared in the Creed everywhere in the West, and their presence there is still one of the barriers to unity with the Eastern Churches.

St. Leo died in 816, having had a stormy pontificate of more than twenty years, full of troubles enough to make the worst sinner a Saint if only he knew how to turn his tribulations to good and holy account.

JUNE 13

*ST. ANTHONY OF PADUA, C.*

(A.D. 1231)

This Saint was born in Lisbon in 1199. He entered the Order of St. Francis when he was twenty-six years of age. Out of humility the Saint concealed his great powers, and was assigned to the kitchen work in the Franciscan house in Italy in which he lived. Being appointed to preach one day, he astonished everyone by his learning and eloquence. The pots and pans were turned over to someone more fitted for kitchen work, and he speedily became one of the greatest preachers of his Order. No church could hold the vast crowds which came to hear him and his powers of spiritual persuasion were such that thousands were converted under the spell of the Word of God as he presented it. His knowledge of Holy Scripture was phenomenal. Indeed, it was said that he knew almost the entire Bible by heart. Pope Gregory IX called him 'the Ark of the Covenant,' on this account, referring to the fact that the tables of the law were laid up in the ark in the tabernacle, even as the whole of the Scriptures seemed to be contained in the mind and memory of the Saint.

He is represented in art holding the Infant Christ in his arms. This is in commemoration of a vision which was

vouchsafed him. Being rapt in prayer, the Holy Mother appeared to him, and placed in his arms the Holy Child. Unspoiled by the favours of God, or by the plaudits of men, he wrought a mighty work in a brief time. He was called to the heavenly fellowship of the Saints in 1231, being thirty-two years of age. Although only six years of his life had been spent as a Friar Minor, he was accorded the high title of 'The Eldest Son of St. Francis.'

JUNE 14

*ST. BASIL, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 379)

St. Basil was born in Asia Minor early in the fourth century. He studied with great distinction at Athens, and was hailed as a distinguished rhetorician, but fearing the honours of the world, he abandoned his career, and founding a monastery in Pontus, he became the father of Eastern monasticism. This change of heart came about chiefly through the influence of Macrina, his sister, who was one of the most remarkable women of her time.

The Arian heretics at this time were in power, and were persecuting the Church. St. Basil's energy and zeal enheartened the faithful, and his powerful arguments put to shame the protagonists of the false doctrines. On the death of Eusebius, he was appointed Bishop of Cæsarea. His commanding character, his learning and eloquence, as well as the humility and austerity of his life, made him a model for all Christians.

The Arian Emperor Valens was at this time harrying the Church, and on a progress through Pontus, he sent the prefect Modestus, his unscrupulous and violent favourite, ahead of him to persuade the bishop to submit to his heretical faith.



“ Know you not,” said Modestus, “ that I have power to make you wince ? ” “ What power ? ” enquired Basil. “ I can order confiscation of property ; banishment, torture, death,” replied the tyrant. “ Think of some more potent menace,” retorted the bishop loftily. “ He who has nothing, can lose nothing ; as to exile, the earth is the Lord’s ; as to death, that would admit me to life, for I am already dead to the world.”

The enraged Modestus shouted, “ I will have your liver torn out ! ” “ That might be an excellent thing,” rejoined the Saint. “ It has always given me much trouble where it is.” “ Never did man dare to speak so boldly to Modestus,” thundered the prefect. “ Perhaps,” replied Basil, with a twinkle of humour, “ Modestus never before met a Christian bishop.” The prefect reported to the emperor, “ We are beaten. This man is above our threats.”

Nevertheless, St. Basil’s life was one of suffering. He was misunderstood and misrepresented, but the after generations recognised him as one of the spiritual and intellectual giants whom God raised up in that age of iron for the support of His Church. He died in 379, crying aloud, with his last breath, “ Into thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.”

JUNE 15

*ST. BERNARD OF MENTHON, Ab.*

(A.D. 1008)

The fame of the Hospice of St. Bernard has spread throughout the world. In all lands men know of the good monks and their faithful dogs who search for travellers lost amidst the Alpine snows. But few know of the holy man who centuries ago founded the hospice on those dreary heights. His name was Bernard, born in the château of Menthon in Burgundy in the year 923. His parents

planned for their only son an illustrious marriage, but Bernard protested, as he desired to devote himself entirely to the service of God.

In those days it was not considered necessary to consult the young people about such matters ; they were supposed to do as they were told. Fearing Bernard's impertinent objections, as the wedding day drew near, his resolute father locked him up in a tower, the only window in which was about twenty feet from the floor. But a little thing like that was no obstacle to the equally resolute son. Love will find a way (in this case it was a potent love for God), and the active young Saint scaled the wall, leaped from the window without injury, and thoughtlessly leaving no intimation of his destination, took his way over the Alps to Aosta, where he received holy orders and in time was made archdeacon.

Bernard was grieved that pilgrims crossing the Alps were exposed to many dangers, and he desired to convert the fierce mountaineers who were all too frequently bandits. The hospice which he founded has afforded refuge to countless travellers, while his labours as a missionary won for him the title of ' the Apostle of the Alps.'

A lovely story is told of the days when St. Bernard presided over his hospice. There came one day an old man and his wife who explained that they were searching for their son, long since lost to them. Bernard recognised them as his parents, and falling on his knees, with tears, he cried, " I am Bernard, I am your son ! " After a few happy days with him, the aged couple returned to Menthon, blessing God that their search had been successful. An old chronicler thus apostrophises them : ' Happy parents ! doubtless in the hours of immortality, you possess that son whom you so long mourned in this land of exile, restored to you in an eternity of happiness, where separations and afflictions are no more ! '

St. Bernard died in 1008, at the age of eighty-five.

JUNE 16

*ST. BENNO, B.C.*

(A.D. 1106)

This Saint was a German, and was Bishop of Meissen in the early twelfth century. He was brought up in the ways of holiness by Bernward, Bishop of Hildesheim.

There was something about him that anticipated the great Saint of Assisi who lived a century after his time. Nothing could be more Franciscan than the following story · One day as he walked and meditated by the shores of a small lake, the incessant piping of the frogs disturbed his devotions. He bade them to be silent, and they instantly obeyed. He had gone some distance on the way home, when, recalling the words of the Benedicite, ‘All that move in the waters, bless ye the Lord,’ his conscience smote him for that he had silenced the little choristers. Hastening back to the lake, he cried, “Little frogs, sing on to the Lord your song of thanksgiving,” and in a moment all the air was filled again with their sweet piping.

St. Benno died in 1106, and his body rests in the church of St. Mary at Munich.

JUNE 17

*ST. BOTOLPH, Ab.*

(A.D. 655)

Everyone knows Boston, but it is not everyone who knows that the name is a corruption of St. Botolph’s Town. Botolph was an Englishman, one of two brothers who were born about the time that St. Augustine in the south, and St. Paulinus in the north, were seeking to bring to our

Saxon fathers the light of the Gospel. Botolph and his brother, Adolph, heard the glorious message gladly, but the incursions of Penda, the Mercian hammer of English Christianity, checked the progress of the Word in the north, and the two brothers, not disobedient to the heavenly vision which, though but partially and dimly, had been revealed to them, crossed the sea to Gaul in order to learn more of this good news of Christ's work for the redemption of mankind.

There they were instructed in the Way, and so eminent did Adolph become as a teacher of the Faith, that he was made Bishop of Maestricht. Perhaps fearing that a like burden might be laid upon him, Botolph returned to England, and, the Christian faith now being no longer banned, he applied to the Saxon king for a piece of ground where he could found a monastery. Receiving permission to take what he liked, 'the unwearied man of God looked about him everywhere till at last he found, by the mercy of God, such a spot, Ikanhoe, which was just the God-forsaken, devil-possessed spot he was in search of.' Thus writes an old Saxon chronicler, amazed at the Saint's ascetical tastes. He chose what is now the site of the town of Boston, amid the Lincolnshire fens, the place after which the American Boston is named. Here he built his monastery, and was venerated and beloved by all who knew him. He died in 655, the same year that brought the heavenly reward to St. Hilda, that other great builder of the walls of Jerusalem in the north country.

JUNE 18

*SS. MARCUS AND MARCELLINUS, MM.*

(A.D. 286)

These Saints were among the illustrious martyrs of the later third century in Rome. Refusing to renounce Christ,

they were subjected to the usual tortures appointed in such cases in order to shake their constancy. We think of these barbarities as indicative of a savage temper on the part of the persecutors, but, as a matter of fact, they were regarded as merciful methods employed by the authorities, who did not want to deliver them to death, and earnestly sought by the application of torture to force them to recant that their lives might be spared. We find in numerous acts of the martyrs that their friends wished to see the torture applied in order that they might be returned to them safe and well.

Proof against all such inducement, these Saints were condemned to be decapitated. Their friends secured a stay of execution of thirty days in the hope that they might be brought to another mind. But while on the one hand, there were those who begged them with tears and agonising appeals to yield, there were others who exhorted them to hold fast, and not lose their crown. Among the latter in the case of these noble confessors was St. Sebastian, who visited them in prison, and urged them to constancy with such holy zeal that he was denounced to the governor, and himself gained the crown of martyrdom which he so zealously desired them to enjoy. Slain at last with the lances of the soldiery, their bodies were reverently laid in the catacomb which has since borne their name.

JUNE 19

*SS. GERVASE AND PROTASE, MM.*

(2ND CENTURY)

St. Ambrose declares that these Saints were the proto-martyrs of Milan. They are said to have been twin brothers who were beheaded for the Faith in the second century, although the exact date is unknown. Though little was known of them in life, two centuries after they

witnessed their good confession, their intercessions and influence wrought great things for the harried Church of Milan.

It was during the episcopate of St. Ambrose when the Empress Justina, a violent abettor of Arianism, and a woman whose natural courage caused her to baulk at nothing, was determined to drive that great leader of the faithful from Milan. At this time, St. Ambrose wished to consecrate a church in the city, but no relics of the Saints were available to place in the altar. St. Augustine tells us both in his *Confessions*, and his great work, *Of the City of God*, that Ambrose in a dream was showed the place where the bodies of these Saints lay. On examination of the spot – the place was within the walls of an ancient church – the relics of two men were found, their bones entire, but their heads separated from their bodies.

The bones were taken up and for two days were exposed in the Church of St. Fausta for the veneration of the faithful, numerous miracles of healing being worked upon the sick by contact with them. An incredibly vast concourse of people watched in prayer for two nights and days before these precious relics, and so inflamed was the spirit of devotion of the citizens that the Empress Justina dared not proceed to extremes in her hatred of St. Ambrose and the orthodox Faith lest a veritable revolution should result. St. Augustine, in the ninth book of his *Confessions*, describes these scenes, which he himself – at the time unbaptised – witnessed, and he avers as his opinion that God had hidden the bodies of the martyrs that He might ‘at the fitting time produce them to repress the feminine but royal fury.’

JUNE 20

*ST. SYLVERIUS, M.*

(A.D. 538)

When the seat of empire was removed from Rome to Constantinople, the former city fell into a state of most unholy disorder. In the sixth century practically every papal election was accompanied by bloody rioting, marked with murder and rapine, and by undisguised and unblushing bribery. In 536, Sylverius came to the papal throne. To recount the long sequence of intrigue and corruption in which every party was equally steeped, and which marked this immediate period, would be a weariness to both flesh and spirit.

A certain Vigilius was set up as anti-pope, and grave accusations were pressed against Sylverius by Court favourites who made unwarranted use of the name of the Emperor Justinian to forward their base designs. Through treachery, Sylverius was thrown into the hands of his enemies, who undertook to depose and banish him. Repairing to Constantinople, he laid his case before the emperor, who was amazed to learn of the iniquities which had been perpetrated in his name. He sent Sylverius back to Rome with stern orders that he be restored to his see, but Rome was a long way off, and before these orders could be executed the pope was seized by the adherents of Vigilius, and banished to a lonely rock in the sea known as Pandataria. What happened there will never be known to history. His life came to a close with suspicious abruptness. It was said by some that he was starved to death, by others that he was murdered out of hand by a woman who was among those appointed to attend him. Whatever was the method of his taking off, the Church has ever regarded him as amongst her martyrs. He died on June 20th, 538.

JUNE 21

*ST. EUSEBIUS OF SAMOSATA, M.*

(A.D. 380)

In 361, the see of Antioch being vacant, Meletius was consecrated its bishop. He was a man of gentle spirit, and the Arians mistook his gentleness for weakness. When they found that it was a virtue which, in the soul of such a Saint, could be as strong as steel, backed by the Emperor, who was an Arian, they sought his deposition. They could not proceed, however, without first obtaining the decree of his appointment which had been placed for safekeeping in the hands of St. Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata. The Emperor Constantius demanded that he surrender the document. St. Eusebius replied, "I cannot surrender a public deposit without the consent of all those who entrusted it to me." Done with temporising, the angry emperor sent a messenger with the peremptory order that he should surrender the decree or have his right hand struck off. Eusebius calmly stretched out his hands to the messenger, saying, "Strike them both off; I will not surrender the document." This challenge put an end to the attempted outrage. The calm courage of the Saint baffled completely the enemies of God.

In the great struggle which lasted for so many generations between the Orthodox and the Arians, who held that the Second Person of the Trinity was a creature, Eusebius played a great part. He visited all Asia Minor, strengthening and encouraging the faithful. St. Gregory of Nazianzen styles him 'the pillar of the truth, the light of the world, the vehicle of the favours of God towards His people, and the support and glory of all the orthodox.'

His effective activity so enraged the emperor that, on some baseless charge, he ordered him into banishment.



When the officer who came to execute the decree appeared, Eusebius quietly said, "My friend, I beg you to conceal your errand lest the people, in the excess of their zeal, drown you." The frightened official took his advice, and that night the Saint went quietly away with him, without bidding farewell to his beloved flock.

An Arian bishop was appointed in his stead, but the people would have no intercourse with him. When he went to the public baths, after he had left, the water was drawn off as having been rendered impure by his touch. Some boys were playing in the street, when their ball bounded between the legs of the ass the bishop was riding. They cried out with horror, and passed the ball through a fire to remove the infection before playing with it again.

On the death of the Emperor Valens, Gratian succeeded him, and the exiles for the Faith were recalled. But Eusebius was not to lose his crown of martyrdom because quieter days had come. In a little Syrian village called Dolicha, where he had gone to enhearten the Christians, an Arian woman threw a tile from the housetop upon him as he passed in the street below, with fatal effect. In his last moments, imitating his Lord, he exacted a pledge from his followers that they would not seek out and punish his murderess, or her accomplices. This occurred about 380.

JUNE 22

*ST. ALBAN, M.*

(A.D. 304)

St. Alban was the first son of the English Church to suffer for the Faith. He was a citizen of Verulam. When the persecution broke out, although himself a pagan, he sheltered in his house a Christian priest who was fleeing from his persecutors. He was so affected by the piety of his

guest, that he professed Christianity and was baptised. It became known in a few days that the hunted priest had taken refuge with Alban, and the authorities demanded his surrender. He allowed the priest to escape, and gave himself up instead. Refusing to burn incense to the gods, he was tortured and finally beheaded. He is generally supposed to have suffered under the Diocletian persecution in 304, but some authorities question this date. The great abbey church in his honour was founded by Offa, King of Mercia, in 793, and the fame of the Saint, and the dignity of his shrine, increased to such an extent that the old name Verulam became forgotten in the name of the shrine, which extended itself to the town.

JUNE 23

*ST. LIETBERT, B.C.*

(A.D. 1076)

This Saint was Bishop of Cambrai. He lived in troublous times, and more than once was he in peril of his life, owing to the rude barbarism of the barons who were continually warring with each other. His unfailing refuge was prayer.

A strange story is told of his custom of going by night to the various churches of Cambrai to pray for his people. He made the rounds of the churches barefoot, accompanied by his chaplains. One Easter Eve he had made the circuit of the churches, and came last of all to the little chapel of the Holy Sepulchre, which adjoined a wide graveyard. It was the night on which our Lord's body lay in the tomb while His soul went to preach to the spirits in prison, and in harmony with the occasion, he prayed earnestly for the souls of those who were buried in the graveyard and whose bones were mouldering beneath the pavement of the little

oratory. And as he finished his prayer, his chaplains heard the voices of the dead beneath the ground respond with loud and solemn Amens. St. Lietbert died in 1076.

JUNE 24

*THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST*  
(A.D. 30)

The Catholic Church celebrates only three Nativities, that of our Lord, that of His ever immaculate Mother, and that of His forerunner, St. John Baptist. The conception and birth of all three were of a miraculous nature. One was Incarnate God ; the second was His Mother, conceived without sin ; the third was the second Elijah, sanctified from his mother's womb. The celebration of a birthday by the Church indicates that she regards the soul whom she thus commemorates as being without sin, for it would not be meet for the Church to rejoice in the coming into the world of one who came as a child of wrath.

The early chapters of St. Luke and St. Matthew give us fairly complete accounts of the ministry of St. John Baptist, of his recognition of our Lord as the Messiah, of his administering to Him baptism, and of his humble dismissal of his own disciples and recommending them to leave him and serve Jesus of Nazareth.

St. John Baptist was not a Christian, but was the last and greatest of the Jewish prophets. There could be no Christian in the true sense until the Holy Ghost had come ; for being a Christian does not consist in an adherence intellectually to the teaching of Christ, nor yet is it merely an imitation, however devoted and faithful, of Him as an exemplar, but it is a union with Him through the operation of the Holy Ghost in those God-ordained Mysteries which we call Sacraments. The imitation of Christ which is

acceptable with God is exercised only through Christ Himself living and working within the Christian. St. Paul put it in a nutshell when he said, 'I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me.'

St. John's baptism was not a baptism for the remission of sins, but a baptism of repentance, and did not make those who received it members of Christ. St. Paul made this clear in his course with the twelve men at Ephesus, who thought they were Christians because they had had the baptism of John, as St. Luke tells us in the nineteenth chapter of the Acts. The baptism of John prepared the hearts of the people to receive from Christ in due time remission of their sins and all other benefits of His Passion.

St. John Baptist was born in 'a city of Juda,' which has been identified with Ain Karim, a hill village of singular beauty a few miles from Jerusalem. It was here that his father, Zacharias, and the blameless Elisabeth lived; and here was sung the great canticle, the Benedictus, on the occasion of the circumcising of the child.

St. Augustine gives a striking mystical interpretation of the humble words of the Baptist, 'He must increase, but I must decrease.' He points out that from St. John Baptist's Day the days begin to shorten, while beginning with the season of the Nativity of our Lord they increase in length.

One of the most dramatic scenes depicted in the Gospels is that in which St. John, the rugged desert hermit, clad in a camel's skin, and girt about the loins with a leathern girdle, strode into the palace of Herod Antipas, and disregarding all Court form and etiquette, denounced the sin of the incestuous king who had taken his brother's wife, with the words, "It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife." Herod feared John, and would have overlooked his action, but the insult was too great for his paramour to forget, and he was imprisoned in the lonely castle of Machærus, on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea; nor was the evil woman

content until she had been able, through the rash oath of the king, to bring about the death of the Saint. He was beheaded in his prison about the year 30, and his head delivered to her on a charger.

The Feast of St. John Baptist is one of the most ancient in the Church. It was an old observance in the time of St. Augustine in the fourth century.

JUNE 25

*ST. PROSPER, C.*

(ABOUT A.D. 455)

While it is a modern innovation for laymen to be admitted to the councils of the Church, it must not be thought that in earlier times they took no interest in theological discussions.

St. Prosper was a layman who lived in the south of Gaul in the fifth century. At that time and in that region the minds of churchmen were occupied with the problem of grace and free-will. Across the Mediterranean in north Africa, the great Augustine was thundering his arguments against Pelagius the British monk, who said man could save himself without the help of God. Many ecclesiastics of Gaul were opposed to the teachings of Augustine, but Prosper, the layman, accepted them wholeheartedly. He entered into correspondence with the African bishop, whom he admired. In reply, St. Augustine wrote his celebrated letters on the Predestination of the Saints.

St. Prosper was instrumental also in procuring from the reigning pope, St. Celestine, a pronouncement against the semi-Pelagian teaching then current in Gaul. In his zeal for the orthodox Faith, St. Prosper composed various works, most of them dealing with the subject of grace and free-will. Among his principal works was a powerful defence of St.

Augustine against the attacks of those who thought he had gone to extremes in his doctrine of divine grace.

He also wrote certain secular works, and in the historical field he might be described as the H. G. Wells of his day. He perpetrated a history of the world from the first day of creation down to the year of his death, which is supposed to have been 455. However, he lived in a simple age, before scientific historical research was known, and there is more excuse for him than for the omniscient chroniclers of our own time.

JUNE 26

*SS. JOHN AND PAUL, MM.*

(A.D. 360)

In the ancient and glorious Litany of the Saints, after the Apostles and Evangelists are invoked, we ask the prayers of 'the noble army of Martyrs.' First occur the names of the three martyr-deacons, Stephen, Laurence, and Vincent, and then four pairs of names. The second of these 'companions in suffering' are St. John and St. Paul. According to their ancient Acts, these Saints were brothers, officers in the Roman army in the days of the great Constantine and his immediate successors. It is evident that they were not among those who, merely looking for the imperial favour, followed the august convert and accepted the Faith, for when, during the brief reign of Julian the Apostate, paganism was once more in the ascendant, the two brothers remained true to Christ. Julian was not a persecutor of the stamp of Nero or Diocletian; his methods were more subtle than theirs; by ridicule and bribery he thought to overthrow the religion of Him whom he was pleased to style 'the Galilean.' Nevertheless, anti-Christian officers and the pagan rabble were not always

averse to employing cruder methods. It was at this time that the soldier-brothers, John and Paul, bore witness by their deaths to the truth of the Faith of the Crucified.

The Christian emperor, Jovian, who succeeded the Apostate, built a church on the site of the home of the brothers in the city of Rome, and there their bodies rest to this day. This church is illustrious in that city of illustrious churches, giving a title to a cardinal.

JUNE 27

*ST. LADISLAS, K.C.*

(A.D. 1095)

This Saint was the son of Bela, king of Hungary. He was not the first heir to the throne, and had no thought of ever bearing the weighty burden of a crown, but on the death of his brother he was compelled to assume the kingly office. He was every inch a king, and a warrior of great prowess, and noblest of all, of a generous and merciful spirit. He restored the good laws and discipline of the saintly King Stephen, and watched over his people with the solicitude of a father, seeing that justice reigned everywhere, and that there should be no oppression of the poor.

In his time there were repeated wars with the Huns who invaded his country, and it was his military genius which finally expelled them. When on the preaching of Peter the Hermit the first Crusade was organised, all Europe looked to Ladislas to head the great expedition to redeem the Holy Land from the power of the infidel. He was making ready to assume this responsibility when, stricken with a fatal illness, he died on July 30th, 1095. His festival is observed on the day of the translation of his body.

JUNE 28

*ST. IRENÆUS, B.M.*

(A.D. 202)

Considering that he was one of the Fathers and teachers of the primitive Church, and a Saint and martyr of great distinction, singularly little is known of St. Irenæus. But what is known of him marks him out as a spiritual genius who was afforded unusual opportunity as a Christian leader, and who improved this opportunity with a most Christian zeal and consecration.

He was born in Asia Minor, exactly when and where not being known. It seems certain that he was a disciple of the great St. Polycarp of Smyrna, who was in his turn a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. St. Irenæus went to Gaul as a missionary, and was there during the persecution of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius, in which the blessed martyr, Pothinus, bishop of that city, met his happy death. St. Irenæus succeeded him, and was himself martyred probably about the year 202. No details of his death have been preserved, nor is the evidence that he really suffered martyrdom conclusive. But the Church has always held to that tradition, and he is commemorated as a martyr both in the West and East. The Greeks celebrate his festival on August 23rd, and they assert in their Acts of the Saint that he was beheaded. Another tradition is that when he was arraigned, he was placed between an idol and a cross, and told to choose between them. Without hesitation he embraced the cross, and had the happiness of dying on it as did his divine Master.

His body was devoutly preserved at Lyons until 1562, when the Huguenots in their Calvinistic rage scattered his relics in the River Rhône. His head was rescued by a pious surgeon, who hid it until more tranquil times prevailed.



JUNE 29

*SS. PETER AND PAUL, App. MM.*  
(1ST CENTURY)

These two Apostles have always been associated together, although two men more different could hardly be found. St. Peter was a Galilean Jew of Bethsaida. He seems to have been an uneducated peasant in fairly comfortable circumstances, owning a house in Capernaum, and engaged in the fishing industry. St. Paul, on the other hand, was a man of high birth ; of distinguished attainments ; a deep scholar and philosopher, and one of the most prominent and trusted members of the Jewish Senate, known as the Sanhedrin.

St. Peter was brother to St. Andrew, and they were partners of SS. James and John in the fishing business on the Lake of Galilee. He was a married man, and St. Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 215) informs us that he had a daughter named Petronilla (see May 31st), his wife being named Perpetua. He was a devout man, and, along with his brother and partners, was a disciple of St. John Baptist, through whom he met our Lord. He does not seem to have followed Him on his first call, but returned to his business in Capernaum to await the further indication of the will of God. With his two partners, James and John, he stood in a particularly intimate relation to Christ, and was admitted by Him into a close confidence which was not shared by the rest of the Twelve. Only these three, we are told in the Gospels, were admitted into the chamber when He raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. They alone were permitted to see the glory of His Transfiguration on the Mount ; they alone were with Him in the awful hours of the agony in the garden.

It seems practically certain that St. Paul never saw our

Lord during His ministry, as he himself testifies that He appeared to him, as to 'one born out of due time.' We first hear of him as a young man, distinguished beyond his years, persecuting the Church, acting as the official witness to see that the death sentence of the Sanhedrin was carried out on the first martyr, Stephen ; and going on expeditions to distant cities to arrest and arraign before the courts any Jews who called themselves by the Name of Christ.

These Apostles had in common the nature of zealots, ready to be sacrificed for any principle of conscience, courageous and swift to act. St. Peter's denial of our Lord can scarcely be taken as an indication of cowardice. An hour or two before this denial, he had, single-handed, drawn his sword, and struck hard, to protect his Lord from His enemies. But when he found that he was not to use such weapons in His defence, he was baffled, and knew not how to act. It was this utter perplexity which unnerved him, not any fear of violence from enemies. There is nothing anywhere in the Gospel history to indicate that St. Peter was a coward, and much to indicate the contrary.

St. Peter was courageous enough, and could speak in a very downright fashion, but he lacked St. Paul's finesse. The clever course by which the latter divided his enemies against themselves, as narrated in Acts xxiii., by appealing to the Pharisaic belief in the resurrection, could scarcely have been used by St. Peter ; and the great Apostle to the Gentiles had a sense of humour of which there is no evidence in the character of his Galilean colleague. One cannot read the account in Acts xxii., of the attempt to bind and scourge St. Paul, without feeling that the Apostle thoroughly enjoyed the humour of the situation which he created. He knew perfectly well his rights as a Roman citizen, but he made no loud and humourless protest against the illegality of the proceeding. He holds out his hands to be bound, and while the soldiers are securing the thongs, he says to the centurion in command in rather a lofty and detached tone,

“Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?” He knew what the reaction would be, and it came instantly. The consternation that reigned was ludicrous indeed, and no one enjoyed it more than St. Paul.

The New Testament account of St. Peter’s life and ministry comes to an abrupt end with his deliverance by the angel from prison. He goes to his friends at the house of John Mark, directs them to report the matter to the bishop, St. James, and ‘departed and went into another place.’ What and where this other place was, is unknown. The prince of the Apostles here disappears from the New Testament history. On the other hand, the larger part of the New Testament is made up of narratives and accounts which give us in great detail the life and labours of St. Paul almost up to the day he won the crown of martyrdom.

Tradition was busy, however, with St. Peter, and many are the stories told concerning his after career. The ‘*Quo vadis*’ incident is one of the most beautiful and significant. The day being set for his execution, St. Peter yielded to the persuasions of his friends, and escaping from the guards of the Mamertine prison where he was confined, he fled from the city. Speeding along the road to safety, he met our Lord, once more bowed down under a heavy cross. In amazement, the Apostle cried, “*Domine, quo vadis?* (Lord, whither goest Thou?)” “I go to Rome to be crucified again in thy stead,” was the reply. Ashamed of his want of fortitude, the Apostle turned back, and hastened to surrender himself to the guards. He was condemned to be crucified on the Vatican Hill, and suffered head down, at his own request, counting himself unworthy to die in the same posture as his Master.

St. Paul, being a Roman citizen, suffered the more honourable punishment of decapitation by the sword. He was executed at Aqua Salvæ, about three miles from Rome on the road to Ostia. The exact day upon which these glorious athletes of God won their crowns is not

known, but very ancient and uncontradicted tradition gives the date as June 29th, and the year was probably 65.

JUNE 30

*BLESSED RAYMOND LULL, M.*

(A.D. 1315)

Few more versatile spirits have graced the annals of the Church than Blessed Raymond Lull. He was a philosopher, poet, and theologian, and also a missionary of burning zeal. He was born in Majorca about 1235, and was a brilliant courtier at the Court of King James of Aragon until he was thirty years old, up to which time he seems to have showed no sign of the great vocation which was awaiting him. He suddenly experienced a profound conversion, and, abandoning the Court and its gay life, he became a hermit, and later a tertiary of St. Francis.

He displayed an extraordinary zeal for the conversion of the Moslem world, and devoted all his energies and influence to this end. He founded a school of philosophy in Majorca in which Oriental, and especially Arabian, lore was studied deeply with the aim of confuting the Mohammedan scholars. About 1290 he made his first visit to the Barbary States, disputing with the Islamic philosophers boldly, and seeking to convert them to Christianity, although he well knew that the securing of the public profession of Christ by one of them would be his own death warrant as well as that of his convert. His very boldness and his range of philosophical erudition seem for a long time to have disarmed his opponents. He was possessed of a most courageous perseverance, which he had occasion to exercise not only in relation to the stubborn-hearted infidels, but also to the equally stubborn-hearted Church authorities of Europe. He sought with tireless zeal to

interest the Pope and the civil authorities in his missionary plans, and there was through many years no Council of the Church that he did not attend, hoping to enkindle the hearts of the complacent dignitaries with somewhat of his own fiery zeal ; nor did their coldness for a moment stay the impetuosity of his consecrated spirit.

His last missionary journey was made in 1315 when he went to Tunis, and, in the course of a public disputation, presented a treatise on the Being of God which he had written in Arabic. But when he began to speak of Christ as God, a tumult was made at what the Mohammedans regarded as blasphemy, and an angry mob hustled him to the sea-shore where he was stoned, and left for dead. He was found, with life still in him, by some Genoese sailors, who took him aboard their ship, and put out to sea, making for Majorca. He never regained consciousness, and died as the ship came in sight of his native land.

He was despised as a visionary, and suspected of heresy, as were most men of his day who were deeply interested in the spiritual things that really mattered. In spite of this, he has been accorded the title of ' Doctor Illuminatus,' and his writings, which fill some five hundred volumes, deal with deep grasp and learning with grammar, rhetoric, morals, theology, civil and canon law, politics, chemistry, medicine, astronomy, metaphysics, and physics.

But best of all, he has been honoured as the forerunner of the modern missionary movement which found expression in the life and work of St. Francis Xavier over two centuries later, and since then in the lives of innumerable consecrated men and women who have immolated themselves to carry the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

JULY 1

*ST. THEOBALD, C.*  
(A.D. 1066)

ST. THEOBALD was the son of a distinguished family which lived near Sens in France. His father was a certain Count Arnulf, and he was reared to occupy a high station in the world, but it was a station which carried with it a life of war and blood. Like Moses of old, he chose rather to suffer in this world for the love of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. He knew that an application to his father to be allowed to retire from the world would be in vain, and so, with several companions of his own station whom his fervour had converted to the same desire, he set off ostensibly on a military expedition, but on reaching an inn, they left their horses and baggage, and fled into Swabia, where they entered upon a life of poverty and prayer. They hired themselves out to farmers in the neighbourhood and thus by the labour of their hands gained what was needed for their livelihood.

Others, attracted by their holy manner of living, joined them, and the worldly fame from which they had fled followed fast upon them. In spite of his changing his residence several times in order to escape notice, men in those days knew a Saint when they saw one, even if they themselves were conspicuously lacking in saintly qualities, and his moving from one part of the country to another only extended the reputation which he was seeking to avoid. Little by little it leaked out who this Saint was, and one of the most moving incidents anywhere related in the Acts of the Saints was that which was witnessed when his aged father and mother, overwhelmed to learn that the holy man whom all the world was praising was none other than their beloved son, came to visit him. So profoundly

impressed were they that they resolved to follow his example and dedicate the remainder of their days to God. His mother, Gisla, made a little cell near to his, and one of the Saint's last interests in this world was to give her instruction in the ways of Christian perfection. It was to him a profound joy that this could be the last work he did for souls. He was shortly afterwards seized with a grave illness, and commending his mother and his disciples to the spiritual care of the neighbouring Abbot of Vandagice, who was his friend and director, he made a happy death on the last day of June in the year 1066.

## JULY 2

*THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN*

This feast is comparatively modern. Like so many beautiful things in the Church's practices, it is Franciscan in its origin. It is first heard of in 1263, when it was adopted by the Franciscans at the suggestion of St. Bonaventura. The friars made the festival known throughout the world, and it was formally extended to the whole Church by Pope Urban VI in 1389, his decree being confirmed at the Council of Basle in 1441.

When the angel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she was to become the Mother of God, for her consolation he informed her that her cousin, Elisabeth, had conceived in her old age and would bear a son. Blessed Mary having given her consent, and God the Eternal Son having become Incarnate in her womb, St. Luke tells us that she hastened to go to her cousin, who lived in one of the hill cities of Judæa, that each might impart to the other the joy which had come to her.

This city of Juda has been identified with the village of Ain Karim, situated some miles south-west of Jerusalem.

At the present time it is one of the few towns in the sterile land of Judæa which present an aspect of natural beauty. It stands high among the hills, gladdening the eye of the approaching traveller with its groves of lofty cypress-trees which lift their slender green spires to heaven.

Here St. Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost on hearing the salutation of Mary, and both she and the unborn Baptist recognised the Virgin's unborn Child to be the God of Israel, the babe leaping for joy in his mother's womb, and the mother in a loud voice declaring the same truth—"And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

St. Elisabeth magnified Mary, but Mary magnified God—"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The Magnificat, sung on this day of her Visitation, was the first canticle of praise offered to the Incarnate God, and it was offered by her who, because of her stainless heart, could offer what was possible from no other living soul.

There was no false humility in the Blessed Virgin Mother, however. She wondered that God should regard her lowly estate, but she could not without fault have sought to minimise the mighty work that God had wrought in her; and full of the spirit of prophecy, she cried, "Behold, from henceforth, all generations shall call me blessed, for He that is mighty hath magnified me"; and bowing down her soul in profound adoration, with loving awe she added, "And Holy is His Name!" God magnified her because she magnified Him.

For three months the Virgin Mother remained in the little hill-city. What communings one with another did these blessed Saints enjoy—the Mother of God, and the blameless Zacharias and Elisabeth! Did she recount to them how the angel had come in unto her, and the wondrous things that followed? Did eager Zacharias in some dumb gesture seek to tell how he, too, had seen the same



Gabriel as he burned the holy incense in the temple, and what revelation and promise had come to him? Or, were these ineffable things secrets of the Lord that even Saints dared not breathe one to another?

JULY 3

*ST. PHOCAS, M.*

(A.D. 303)

St. Phocas was a gardener by trade, and lived in a cottage just outside the gates of the town of Sinope in Asia Minor. During the Diocletian persecution in 303, he was denounced to the authorities as a Christian. Two soldiers were sent to kill him. Before entering the city they asked leave to stop to rest in a house outside the walls, telling their host their errand, and asking his assistance in finding their man. It happened that their host was no other than Phocas himself. He gave them good hospitality, and assured them that he knew the man they wanted, and that if they would tarry until morning he would point him out. After they had retired he dug his own grave, and then spent the night preparing his soul for the last passage. At dawn he called the men, and announced that the man they were seeking was close at hand. On their enquiring where he was, the martyr replied, "He is present, for I myself am the man." Struck by his undaunted resolution, they stood dumb in his presence, not able to bring themselves to slay the man who had displayed such heroic virtue, and who had entertained them so courteously. Phocas encouraged them. "You look upon death as the great disaster," he said, "but to me he is the most welcome guest, for he it is who will conduct me to the presence of my Lord whom I love and long for." Recovering themselves, but with sadness of heart, they performed the office as they had been commanded, and struck off his head.

JULY 4

*ST. ANDREW OF CRETE, B.C.*

(A.D. 740)

St. Andrew was born in Damascus about the year 660. He went to Jerusalem where he embraced the monastic life. From there he went to Constantinople, where he entered into ecclesiastical politics, and at this period he showed no signs of that sanctity which afterwards made his name honoured in the Church. He was mixed up with the Monothelite heretics, who held that Christ had no human will, but that the divine will alone dwelt in Him. This, of course, was to say that He was not perfect man. As a reward of his pliability the emperor appointed Andrew to be Archbishop of Crete, the post which was first held by St. Titus. Here, far from the intrigues of the Court, his better self emerged, and renouncing his errors, he proved himself indeed a father in God to his wayward people. He is chiefly known by his hymns, the most popular of these amongst us being the one for Lent which in our translation, made by Dr. Neale, begins, 'Christian, does thou see them.' This hymn sets forth much of the experience of the Christian soul in temptation – 'Christian, does thou *see* them?' 'Christian, dost thou *feel* them?' 'Christian, dost thou *hear* them?' The date of his death is generally given as the year 740.

JULY 5

*ST. MODWENA, Ab.*

(9TH CENTURY)

St. Modwena was an Irish nun who came into England about the year 840, during the reign of King Ethelwulf.

This devout monarch, impressed with her wisdom and sanctity, entrusted to her the education of his daughter, Editha, and founded for her the monastery of Pollesworth in Warwickshire. Here she trained the young princess to be her successor, and this religious foundation continued to flourish until the bloody days of Henry VIII, being called by the name of St. Editha who became its second abbess.

The Abbess Modwena made other foundations both in England and Scotland, and such was the regard in which she was justly held for her holiness and ability that she might have become another St. Hilda in weight of influence in the concerns of Church and State. But no such ambitions disturbed the calm of the heart of this great mother in Israel. She asked naught save the opportunity to pray and to serve. Retiring from her position of rule, she gave the final seven years of her fruitful life to solitude and devotion in a little island in the river Trent which was called Andresey, from the Apostle St. Andrew, under whose invocation her little island oratory was dedicated. The exact date of her death is unknown. She was buried on Andresey, but about a century and a half later, in 1004, when the great abbey of Burton-on-Trent was founded, her body was removed thither, and the foundation dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary and St. Modwena. The abbey was sometimes called Modweneston.

JULY 6

*ST. SISOES, Ab.*  
(5TH CENTURY)

This Saint was an Egyptian monk who lived in the fifth century, and was a disciple in his earlier years of the great St. Anthony. Little is known of the events of his life, but many stories have been preserved of his holiness and wisdom. He had a peculiar tact in dealing with recalcitrant

sinners, which often had in it a subtle quality of humour which made him a very human kind of Saint.

One day he was seeking to reconcile two men, one of whom claimed that the other had done him a grievous wrong. No persuasion or argument could induce the wronged party to relent in his purpose of vengeance. "Then let us pray about it," said the Saint, and the two kneeled down together. "O Blessed Lord," prayed the Saint in a loud voice, "we beseech Thee to take no more concern about our affairs; be no longer our protector; henceforth we can manage for ourselves; we shall take vengeance of our enemies and direct our lives according to our own wisdom. Amen." Needless to say, the sinner's purpose of revenge melted away when he realised what the Saint's prayer meant.

Three hermits came to him one day for consolation. One of them said, "My Father, I think night and day of the fires of hell. How shall I escape them?" The Saint answered not a word. The second said, "I think of the gnashing of teeth and the worm that dieth not. How shall I flee from the wrath to come?" No word from the Saint. The third said, "O my Father, I have ever before me the awful outer darkness, and the unspeakable horror thereof crushes me down." After a few moments' pause, the abbot lifted up his face to heaven and said, "I never give them a thought. I think how good my heavenly Father is, and I know that He will have mercy on me, a miserable sinner."

When he lay dying, the brethren heard him murmur, "My father Anthony is coming to me!" After a moment he said, "I see the choirs of the prophets and apostles!" And presently, "Lo, the angels come to bear my soul away!" Then he lay for a few moments, when a great light illuminated his face, a thrill ran through his wasted body, and stretching forth his trembling arms, he cried in a loud voice, "My Lord, my Lord comes to me!" and sank back on his pallet dead.

In his extreme age, he was induced to move to the town of Clysma on the Red Sea, but the noise of the crowds troubled the old man, and the frequent visitors distracted him from his prayers, and he soon came back to the beloved solitude of his desert. He died about the year 420, being about eighty-eight years old.

JULY 7

*ST. WILLIBALD, B.C.*

(A.D. 790)

This Saint, destined to be a bishop and a noted traveller of the eighth century, was a weak and sickly infant. When he was three years old his devout parents, despairing of his life, carried their little son to a wayside cross near their home in southern England and vowed that if he were restored to them they would devote him to the service of Christ in the Religious Life. Their prayer was heard, and two years later the boy was placed in the Abbey of Waltham. Here the little Willibald made excellent progress in learning, and was beloved for his gentleness.

When he was eighteen years of age, Willibald left England in company with his father and an older brother. The apostolic city of Rome was the destination of these travellers, but the old man died in Lucca, and was honourably buried by his sons. The two young men then continued their journey. But even the 'threshold of the Apostles' was not enough for Willibald. He could not be satisfied until he had seen the Holy Land where the Saviour had lived. So, journeying on, he reached Palestine in the summer of 722. He has left us an interesting account of his various adventures, and of the holy places which he visited.

Returning, Willibald stayed for two years in Constantinople, living in a chamber of the Great Church. When he

at length reached Italy, Willibald received a summons from his kinsman, St. Boniface, to come and assist in the evangelisation of Germany. He responded to the call, and was shortly afterwards consecrated the first Bishop of Eichstadt. Here he established a monastery and sent his disciples out into all the surrounding country. At the advanced age of eighty-six, St. Willibald passed to his reward, and his body has since slept in the cathedral of Eichstadt.

JULY 8

*ST. KILIAN, B.M.*

(A.D. 679)

This Saint was one of the great army of Irish monks who, inflamed with love of God and of the souls of their fellow-men, spread themselves over north Europe, preaching to the heathen, making peace between warring tribes, enduring untold hardships, and gaining crowns of martyrdom. He carried the Gospel into Franconia, and was instrumental in converting Gozbert, the duke of that region. Gozbert, as a pagan, had married his dead brother's wife, which is not allowed by the Church. At first, St. Kilian made no demand on Gozbert regarding this irregularity, but when he had definitely committed himself to the Faith and solemnly undertaken to meet all the obligations it imposed, the Saint tactfully represented to him that in his marital relations he was transgressing the divine laws he had undertaken to fulfil.

Gozbert was troubled at this demand, but on consideration, said, "I have already made many sacrifices for Christ, and I see no reason why I should baulk at this one."

But Geilana, his wife, was not so complacent. It meant to her the sacrifice of every earthly ambition, and the loss of her place and prestige as Duchess of Franconia. Gozbert was

at this juncture called away on a military expedition, and his wife seized upon his absence as the occasion of righting what she counted as her wrongs. Engaging two assassins, she sent them to the Saint by night. They found Kilian and two companions employed in singing the Divine Office, and reckless of either their sacred character or the sanctity of the place, they broke into the church and attacked them. They neither made resistance nor sought safety in flight, and their heads were struck off and their bodies hastily buried.

On his return, Gozbert enquired for the Saint, and the atrocious crime was exposed. The Saint and his two companions in martyrdom, Coloman and Totnan, were buried in the following century in the splendid church which one of his successors, Bishop Burkhardt, erected at Würzburg, and the graceful towers of the church as seen to-day mark the resting place of the martyrs. They suffered in 679.

JULY 9

*THE MARTYRS OF GORKUM*

(A.D. 1572)

If anyone wishes to know the full history of the martyrs of Gorkum in the Netherlands under the Calvinist Prince of Orange, he will find a long and detailed account in Baring Gould's *Lives of the Saints*. No atrocities of the Duke of Alva exceeded those perpetrated by the Calvinists. There were many murders and massacres, but the culmination came on July 9th, 1572, when nineteen priests and friars were put to death with revolting cruelties. Godfrey Geneus, an aged priest, was the best-known of the devoted company. Leonard Vacchel, one of the younger of the martyrs, hesitated as he was about to ascend the ladder to be hanged. "Courage, Master Leonard," cried Geneus ;

“this day we shall assist at the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Geneus was the last to suffer. As he ascended the scaffold, he cried, “Hasten, Lord, to unite me with my brethren.” As the rope was being adjusted, he cried, “Already I see the heavens open”; and then, turning to the throng of his enemies, he said, “If I have wronged or offended anyone, I ask his pardon.”

The execution was performed in so barbarous a manner that the martyrs were many hours in dying. The rope supported one only by the chin; another had the cord tied through his mouth like a bridle. Some hung in torture for a whole day before death, more merciful than the Calvinists, came to release them.

JULY 10

*ST. FELICITAS OF ROME, M.*

(2ND CENTURY)

This Saint was one of those noble mothers whose vision of heavenly things was so clear that she rejoiced that her children, to whom she was tenderly devoted, should in this world by a light affliction, which is but for a moment, win in the world to come a far greater and eternal weight of glory.

She was the mother of seven sons, whom she had brought up in the love and reverence of God, who were haled to the court, charged with being Christians. Publius, the prefect of the city, ordered them to make the usual sacrifice to the gods, and urged Felicitas to save them by persuading them to obey. “Have compassion on thy sons,” he said, “youths in the flower of their age.”

The holy matron replied, “Thy compassion is impiety, and thy advice cruelty,” and turning to her sons, she said, “Behold the heavens, and look up, my children; there



Christ awaits you with His Saints. Fight for your souls, and show yourselves faithful to God."

Enraged at her contempt, the prefect cried, "Dost thou dare to give this advice in my presence!" and ordered her to be taken into custody and arraigned with her sons. But neither threats nor torments could shake them, and firm to the last, they won their crowns. The date of their martyrdom is uncertain, as is also the identity of the emperor under whose persecuting decrees they suffered.

JULY 11

*ST. SIGISBERT, C.*  
(A.D. 613)

St. Sigisbert was one of the Saints who devoted their lives to the conversion of heathen Switzerland. He was a monk of Luxeuil, and a disciple of the great Columbanus, and is supposed to have accompanied him when he went on his missionary errand to the heathen Swiss, and to have remained amongst them when his master returned.

Finding a favourable valley near the sources of the Rhine, between the snowy ridges that culminate in the Todi and the Scopi, he settled there, making it a starting-point for his expeditions into the more settled valleys where the heathen tribes lived. In 613 he built the abbey of Disentis, where he maintained the headquarters of his mission. A local chief, Victor by name, enraged at this invasion of his country by the Christians, slew Placidus, who was Sigisbert's principal companion in his labours. Undismayed by this opposition, Sigisbert persisted in his mission, and it is an illustration of the triumph of the Faith that it was a grandson of this same Victor who became Bishop of Chur in that region, and secured it for the Church. The Saint gained the reward of his labours in 613.

Qg

JULY 12

ST. JOHN GUALBERT, Ab.

(A.D. 1073)

This Saint and his career seem to have made a powerful appeal to English writers and artists. Perhaps the most popularly known passage in Milton's great epic is his reference to the place which John Gualbert made ever holy by his great monastic foundation –

Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks  
In Vallombrosa where th' Etrurian shades  
High over-arched imbower.

The Georgian laureate, Southey, wrote an extensive poem on the Saint ; Shorthouse adapted his story in his novel, *John Inglesant* ; and Burne-Jones made him the model of his painting of ' The Merciful Knight.' But, for all this, one can venture to say that his history is little known amongst Anglicans.

John Gualbert was the son of a noble Florentine family. His brother was treacherously slain in a duel, and John took an oath that he would kill the murderer on sight. One Good Friday, as he was making his way up the little narrow road which leads from the Porta Romana to the church of San Miniato, he met his enemy face to face. The man was unarmed, and John, drawing his sword, was about to run him through, when he fell on his knees and, extending his arms in the form of a cross, begged him to spare him for the sake of Him who on that day died on the Cross to save the world. Overcome with horror at the realisation of how near he had come to a crime of blood on this holy day, he not only forgave him, but embraced him as his friend, and sent him on his way in safety.

Hastening to the church, he knelt before the altar in

thanksgiving to God for delivering him from the commission of so great a crime. As he prayed, the head of the Christ on the crucifix bowed in smiling approval of him. John took it as sign that his life was to be dedicate to God, and his vehement persuasions overcame the hesitation of the abbot, and he took the habit of St. Benedict at San Miniato.

A little later, desiring a stricter life, he attached others to his plan, and they repaired to Vallombrosa in the Apennines, where he made the foundation which speedily became famous as an abode of austere asceticism. The Saint became a great monastic reformer, and his fiery zeal against the then prevalent sin of simony did much to purge the Church. His humility prevented him from taking Holy Orders. He went to his reward in 1073.

JULY 13

*ST. EUGENIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 505)

For some unknown reason history has dealt fully and at great length with the persecutions under the Roman emperors, but has failed to emphasise those which the Church suffered under the Arian dominance in several parts of the world through more than two hundred years.

One of the most shameless of these was that which harried the Church in north Africa. In 484 the Vandal king, Huneric, proclaimed a general proscription of all orthodox Christians. If they were willing to give their adherence to the doctrine of Arius that the Son of God was merely the first of God's creatures, they would be spared. If they persisted in holding that He was the everlasting God, of one substance with the Father, torture, exile, death awaited them.

The Arian bishops were the agents of this persecution.

They went through the towns and cities filling every place with scenes of horror—scourging, mangling, torturing, banishing, their dread activities extending themselves even to delicate women and little children. Four hundred and sixty bishops were herded into Carthage, where St. Eugenius ruled the Church with a rare wisdom and courage. From thence they were to be sent into exile. Most of these were aged men, eighty-eight of whom died under their hardships, the rest being banished. With a boldness born of the Holy Spirit, St. Eugenius worked indefatigably, day and night, for the relief of these confessors, recking naught of the peril which, like a Damoclean sword, hung over his own head. Suddenly, without warning, he too was hurried into exile.

“If I return,” he said to his weeping flock, “I may see you in this life. If not, I shall meet you in the other. Pray for us and fast. Fasting and alms have never failed to move God to mercy. Above all things, remember that we are not to fear those who can kill only the body.”

St. Eugenius was banished to the desert parts of Tripoli, where he suffered many things for the Faith. On the death of Huneric he was allowed to return for a time, but his spirit was too steadfast, and his encouragement of the suffering Christians too bold, to please the Arian rulers, and he was again exiled, this time being sent across the sea to Languedoc, which was at this period also under Arian rule. Here he died in 505, a thousand times a martyr in will for the truth of Christ.

JULY 14

*ST. BONAVENTURA, Ab.D.*

(A.D. 1274)

This Saint, who was born at Bagnarea in Tuscany in 1221, was christened John. The great St. Francis was

asked to pray for his recovery from an illness when he was in his fourth year, and on his prayers being answered, he took the child in his arms, and cried in an ecstasy, "*O bona ventura* (O good fortune)!" And so little John became Bonaventura. He joined the Order of St. Francis as a young man, and was sent to study at the university of Paris, where he attained great distinction, not only as a scholar but as a Saint.

When thirty-six years old he was made the General of the Franciscan Order. He did not let high preferment turn his head. Pope Gregory X made him a cardinal, and when the nuncio arrived at the monastery with the red hat, he found the Saint washing the supper dishes in the kitchen garden. When told of his errand, he said, "Please hang the hat on that bush until I get through with the dishes."

He was a great friend of St. Thomas Aquinas, and when one day the latter asked him where he got all his wonderful doctrine, he pointed to the crucifix saying, "From this I learn all that I know."

When the great feast of Corpus Christi was instituted in the thirteenth century, these two Saints were commissioned each to draw up an office for the day, which was to be submitted to a committee of cardinals. When they came with their work, St. Thomas was directed to read his first. He did so, and when it came St. Bonaventura's turn, it was found that the humble Saint, on hearing what his friend had read, was so impressed with its superiority that he had destroyed his own composition. The present office of Corpus Christi is by St. Thomas, and is, with its exquisite antiphons and hymns, one of the most noble and moving the Church possesses, but one grieves to think what was lost through the humility of St. Bonaventura.

It is not generally remembered that this 'Seraphic Doctor,' as he was called from the burning spirit of love that was infused into his writings, came near being identified with the Church of England. In 1265 he was offered

the archbishopric of York, but his humility constrained him to decline the weighty honour.

St. Bonaventura died at Lyons in 1274, at the age of fifty-three.

JULY 15

*ST. VLADIMIR, C.*

(A.D. 1015)

St. Andrew, the Apostle, is said to have preached in south Russia, and a tradition tells of his climbing a lofty hill in Scythia, and pointing to the north with the words, "See you those hills? On them shall yet shine forth the grace of God." But the darkness was to endure for nine centuries before the light should break over that land.

Vladimir was Emperor of Russia in 986, when, becoming dissatisfied with the religion of his fathers, he sent envoys to Constantinople to enquire into Christianity. Attending a Solemn Mass in St. Sophia, and seeing the ranks of acolytes in garments of white, they said, "We have seen young men with wings, in dazzling robes, who, without touching the ground, chanted, 'Holy, Holy, Holy.'"

"Do you not know," replied their guide, "that the angels from heaven come down and assist at the services of the Christians?"

They returned and reported to Vladimir that in the Christian worship they knew not whether they were in heaven or on earth. The emperor sent for missionaries, and accepted the Faith with his people. He died in 1015, after a long reign.

The contrast between his cruelty as a pagan and his mildness and purity of morals after his conversion is fondly commented on by the old Russian annalists. In Russia he is commemorated by the title, 'Equal to an Apostle.'

JULY 16

*ST. HELIER, M.*  
(6TH CENTURY)

In the sixth century there lived in the country now occupied by the kingdom of Belgium a pagan chief named Sigebard, whose great grief was that, after many years of married life, he had no heir to his name and state. Cunibert, a Christian priest who lived near by, promised to pray that he might have a son, on the condition that the child be given to him to be reared as a Christian. His prayers were heard, and a son was born to Sigebard, and was given the name of Helier.

The boy grew up with a great devotion to his master, but Sigebard, in his jealousy of Cunibert's influence, thought to sever the relationship by slaying the priest. The foul deed was perpetrated one evening as he was reading the psalter. Young Helier, coming in, found his friend lying dead, his blood-stained hand clutching fast his breviary, and his finger resting on the last line he had recited – ‘When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?’

Horried at the cruel murder, Helier fled from home, and after numerous wanderings, took up his abode in the isle of Jersey on a rock which stands in the little bay which still bears his name. Here he spent several years in a life of prayer and seclusion, an ever wise and ready counsellor of all who came to him for spiritual comfort. He was slain during an invasion by channel pirates. We do not know the exact circumstances of his death, but they were such that the Church has ranked him amongst her martyrs.

JULY 17

*ST. MARINA, V.*

(ABOUT 8TH CENTURY)

The history of this Saint is a strange narrative which scarcely could be credited except that it has received wide currency both in the Eastern and Western Churches. The story is that a certain man was left a widower with a little daughter whose name was Marina. Heartbroken, he gave her in charge of a relative, and retired into a monastery near Constantinople. After some time, his heart went out after the child, and the abbot, finding him one day weeping, asked the cause of his grief. "I have a little son in the world, and my heart aches for him," he said. "Go, dear brother," said the abbot, "and bring him here, and he shall dwell with you."

Upon this, he reclaimed the child, cut off her hair, dressed her in boy's clothes, and calling her Marinus, brought her to the monastery, where she lived with him until she was seventeen, when the father died. She continued to occupy his cell, and worked on the abbey farm. A part of the work required journeys to a village some distance away, where the brothers occasionally had to pass the night at an inn. The innkeeper's daughter, having been betrayed by a passing traveller, and given birth to a boy, accused Brother Marinus as its father. On being questioned by the abbot, Marinus only replied, "My Father, I am a sinner." She was driven from the cloister, and for several years, in profound humility and penance, begged at the monastery gate, and when the unnatural mother who had accused her, abandoned the boy, she took him and brought him up. The saintliness of the beggar was so manifest that after a time the abbot consented to receive her again, with the young boy whose father she was reported to be.



Not long afterwards she sickened and died, and then it came to light that she was a woman. The conscience-stricken abbot fell on the ground in a passion of grief, crying, "Judge me not, O Lord Jesus Christ, because I, in the pride of my heart, judged wrongfully." Marina was buried with great reverence, and her saintly memory won for her much devotion in the north of Italy, where numerous churches are dedicated in her honour. Her feast is observed in the West on this day, on which there was a translation of her relics to Venice. The Greeks commemorate her on February 12th.

JULY 18

*ST. CAMILLUS OF LELLIS, C.*

(A.D. 1614)

Camillus was born in the Abruzzi, but, in spite of a dream his mother is said to have had of giving birth to a child with a cross on his breast, as a boy he showed no indications of the divine purpose for him. He became a soldier of fortune, and through a passion for gambling, fell from one degradation to another, until he was reduced to the shame of beggary. Employed one day in assisting the masons on a building for the Capuchins at Siponto, the superior spoke to him about the state of his soul. This approach melted his heart, and in deep penitence he asked to be received into the monastery. But the breaking out of an old wound made this impossible.

Taking this as an indication that God had some other call for him, he prepared himself for Holy Orders, humbly entering a seminary with young lads, and patient of the fact that he was a jest amongst them, he finally achieved his aim, and was priested in 1584. His own sufferings drew him to help others by nursing in the hospitals. Let it be remembered that, in the sixteenth century, hospitals were far from being the delightfully clean and sanitary places

they are in our time. They were used only by strangers who were stranded, by the very poorest of the people, and by those afflicted with incurable and loathsome diseases. The attention given the patients was of the crudest kind, and Sarah Gamp was a nurse ideal for charity and tenderness compared with the hirelings who looked after the poor outcasts in an Italian hospital three hundred years ago.

Camillus concluded that the work, to be done aright, must be done by men consecrated to the love of God. He founded his Congregation in the year he was ordained, and his zeal and holiness drew many to associate themselves with him. He and his companions nursed the most repulsive cases with their own hands, sparing themselves in nothing. Above all, they had constantly in mind the spiritual care of their patients, and many an abandoned soul learned anew the love of a blessed Saviour through the tenderness of their instruction, and rejoiced in a good death, supported by the Sacraments in his last hour.

Before his death, which occurred in 1614, St. Camillus had the happiness of seeing his Order formally approved by the Church, and its houses flourishing all over Italy, and in many other parts of Europe, especially in those regions, such as Hungary, which were afflicted by that deadliest and most terrifying of epidemics, the plague.

In his last illness, St. Camillus overheard the physicians tell the brethren that there was no hope of his recovery, and with radiant countenance, he cried, "I rejoice in what hath been told me ; we will go into the house of the Lord."

JULY 19

*ST. VINCENT DE PAUL, C.*

(A.D. 1660)

This Saint seems like a man of our own time, for he was far ahead of his own generation, and has been dead less

than three hundred years. He was born in the south of France in 1576. His parents were poor, hard-working peasants, but they secured an education for their son whom they had dedicated to the priesthood.

As a young priest he made a voyage out of Marseilles, bound for a neighbouring port, when his vessel was captured by Barbary pirates, and the Saint was sold into slavery.

His master was a renegade Christian. One of his wives one day happened to be in the fields where Vincent was working, and asked him of his own country, and of his religion. He eagerly seized the opportunity to tell her of Christ. She then asked him to sing for her some of the songs of the Christians.

The remembrance of his native land, and of the loved ones there, brought to his mind the words of the Psalmist, and with tears in his eyes, he sang : " By the waters of Babylon we sat down and wept when we remembered thee, O Sion. . . . For they that led us away captive required of us then a song, and melody, in our heaviness : Sing us one of the songs of Sion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land ? "

Deeply impressed by what she had heard, and with the old song of Sion ringing in her ears and sounding in her heart, she spoke to her husband, reproaching him for having turned his back on a Faith that had in it so much beauty and comfort such as even she, in her ignorance, had found in the songs that Vincent had sung to her.

After the reproaches of his wife, he took Vincent into his confidence, and so mightily did the holiness of his young slave appeal to him that he returned to the Faith, and with his wife and Vincent escaped to France.

The Saint's devotion to the poor was great. Among the many foundations which he made were the Sisters of Charity and the Mission Fathers of St. Lazarus, both of which have carried the fame of their founder to the ends of the earth. St. Vincent died in 1660.

JULY 20

*ST. JOSEPH BARSABAS, C.*

(1ST CENTURY)

This Saint is a hidden soul indeed. His name occurs in the New Testament once, in the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, and there we learn that he was one of the earliest disciples of our Lord, and had companied with the Twelve from the period of the baptising of John unto the Ascension, being a witness of the Resurrection, and of all the things that were to be taught in the evangelisation of the nations. When the choice had to be made of a successor to Judas, he, along with St. Matthias, was counted worthy to be nominated for the holy office of apostleship, the lot, however, falling upon St. Matthias.

He then disappears from the Scripture, but the early history of the Church is not without some glimpses of his ministry. He is said to have preached the Gospel to many pagan nations, and Papias, who wrote just after the death of St. John, records that on one occasion he was given a poisoned cup, which he drank, and the prophecy of our Lord came true that 'if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them.'

No tradition remains of his end. Whether he had the privilege of suffering martyrdom for Christ is not known. His festival is observed in the Eastern Church on June 30th.

JULY 21

*ST. VICTOR OF MARSEILLES, M.*

(A.D. 304)

In the year 304 the Emperor Maximian conducted a bloody carnival of persecution through the cities of Gaul.

Coming to Marseilles, his presence filled the Church with consternation. Victor was a Christian officer in the army, and anticipating that on the morrow the cruel work would begin, he spent the night going to the houses of the Christians, warning them, and encouraging them to play the man for Christ's sake, reminding them of the glorious reward that they now had the opportunity of gaining at the slight cost of a few hours of suffering.

Denounced to the emperor, Victor was brought before the tribunal, but the imperial wrath had no power to move him. A distinguished officer, it was Maximian's earnest wish to save him from what he regarded as the spell, as it were of witchcraft, under which he laboured; but the martyr who had put heart into so many of his weaker brethren did not have it in him to yield. He was subjected to the usual tortures, being stretched for hours upon the rack, and torn with the sharp steel-toothed combs, the use of which in those cruel days constituted a regular part of the court procedure in order to bring recalcitrant prisoners to terms. Finally, his head was struck off with a sword. In the fifth century the Abbot John Cassian built a splendid church over his tomb, and there his body was venerated by the faithful for fourteen hundred years, until during the French Revolution the relics were scattered by the mob.

JULY 22

*ST. MARY MAGDALENE*

(1ST CENTURY)

The generally accepted Catholic opinion in the West up to the sixteenth century was that Mary of Bethany, Mary Magdalene, and 'the woman who was a sinner,' were one and the same person. Among the Easterns it was held that they were different persons. The subject bristles with

thorny difficulties, and no careful scholar will dogmatise about it. But, God be praised, it is not necessary to settle the problem of these identities before rejoicing in the many lessons which the slender Scripture narrative affords us.

This truly penitent soul proved her conversion by her works and faith. She was one of the little group which stood beside the Cross, and it was to her that the risen Lord first appeared as she stood weeping outside the empty tomb on Easter morning. She was honoured by being made the messenger of the Lord to His disciples to announce to them that He was risen from the dead.

An old tradition, which also has been the subject of much controversy, says that St. Mary Magdalene went to the south of France with her brother Lazarus, who was the first apostle of the Gospel in that part of the world. Nothing authentic, however, is known of her beyond the brief and wonderful narrative contained in the New Testament.

It is much to be regretted that the Anglican Prayer Book provides no Mass for this Saint. It is the only part of the Catholic Church in the world which so neglects her blessed memory. Through the rest of the Church several days are devoted to her. In the old Hildesheim breviary her Conversion is celebrated on March 1st. The finding of her relics gives a feast on May 5th, and certain translations of relics are locally commemorated on various other days.

JULY 23

*ST. JOHN CASSIAN, Ab.*

(ABOUT A.D. 405)

This Saint is said to have been of Scythian extraction. He was probably a native of Constantinople, born some time about the middle of the fourth century, although he spent the greater part of his life in Gaul.

About 390, he obtained a leave of absence from his monastery in southern Gaul, and with a friend named Germanus, he spent several years amongst the monasteries of Egypt and the East, studying in great detail their method of living the Religious Life. On his return, at the request of Castor, Bishop of Apté, he wrote an account of the Life as it was lived in the deserts, for the guidance of the Religious of the monastery of St. Victor. This book, known as his *Institutes*, is the most complete and valuable account extant of the method of the monastic life of that period.

On this same visit to the East, he secured the material for his still greater work, the *Collationes*, or *Conferences*. This is one of the greatest ascetical works that has ever been written, and for fifteen hundred years no one has attempted to write about the exercises of the spiritual life without having recourse to it as to one of the primary authorities.

His method was to visit the great monastic leaders in the East, and propound to them all manner of questions in order to draw out their spiritual wisdom, the replies being taken down, apparently in shorthand, with great fullness. The works of Cassian appear in the *Post-Nicene Fathers*, translated by Dr. Gibson, the late Bishop of Gloucester.

This Saint was thought by some to be involved in certain semi-Pelagian errors, and for this reason he has never been raised to the altars of the Western Church, although his name appears in certain Gallican lists of Saints. He is commemorated in the East on February 28th, or on the 29th in leap years.

JULY 24

ST. FRANCIS SOLANO, C.

(A.D. 1610)

Not all the Spaniards who came to the New World after its discovery by Columbus were avaricious adventurers.

Many holy priests, zealots for the salvation of the souls of the Indians, came also. Among these was Francis Solano, a Franciscan friar from the diocese of Cordova. He chose Peru for the scene of his labours, and sailed for that distant field in 1589. When the ship was wrecked on the way and the other young Spaniards escaped in the longboat, Francis refused to leave the poor negro slaves who were on the vessel. He remained with them, and instructed them in the Christian faith, baptising them, and encouraging them. He and the other survivors of the storm were rescued after three days, and proceeded to Peru. There he did not confine himself to missionary work among the Indians, but boldly attacked the vices of the Spanish Conquistadors, and with such success that the entire population of Lima was moved. In the summer of 1610, St. Francis fell ill of a fever. He died with his hands folded over his crucifix on his breast, as the bells of the monastery chapel pealed for the elevation at the Mass. "God be glorified," were his last words.

JULY 25

*ST. CHRISTOPHER, M.*

(3RD CENTURY)

A Saint of this name was martyred in the Decian persecution about the year 250. Many legends have been told of him. He was said to be a man of gigantic stature, and he had an ambition to serve the strongest king in the world. Accordingly he attached himself to the army of a neighbouring king of great prowess. One day as a minstrel sang before the king, he mentioned the devil, whereupon the king with a look of fear made the sign of the Cross. On enquiring what this meant, St. Christopher was told that his master feared the power of Satan. Upon this, Christopher started off to find Satan, whom he supposed to be the stronger



monarch. He soon came up with him, and entered his service. For a while all seemed to go well, for Satan was able to vanquish all whom he met in conflict. One day while on the march, a cross was seen by the roadside. Satan looked at it, and trembling, turned into a by-road rather than pass it. Thus Christopher learned that Satan too was afraid, and enquiry brought the intelligence that this cross belonged to Christ, the King of Heaven. Christ then, argued Christopher, must be the strongest king of all. He went to a hermit, and asked him how to find Christ the King. He was directed to go to a dangerous ford over a neighbouring river, and help pilgrims and strangers over the flood, and that in this service he would find Him whom he sought. One night he heard a cry for help on the farther side of the stream, and on going over, he found a little child, who begged to be taken across. Lifting him lightly to his shoulder, he started to carry him over. But as he went, the burden of the child grew heavier and heavier until the giant was wellnigh crushed beneath the load. Stopping, he asked, "Who art thou?" "I am Christ, the King of Heaven," was the reply, "and you are carrying Him who carries the sins of the world."

The name Christopher is made from two Greek words, *Christos* and *phero*, and means *Christ-bearer*. St. Christopher is represented in art with the Christ Child on his shoulder, wading through the river.

JULY 26

ST. ANNE, MOTHER OF THE B.V.M.

(1ST CENTURY)

The New Testament gives us no account of the parents of the Blessed Virgin, but there is an early record called the *Protevangelium of St. James*, which goes back to the second century, that tells us that her father and mother were

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named Joachim and Anne. They had no children, and had long prayed that God would take away the reproach of childlessness, which among the Jews was often regarded as a judgment on some sin of the parents.

One day, St. Anne was praying in her garden when, lifting her eyes, she saw a nest in the tree above her, over which the mother-bird was tenderly hovering. "Alas, O Lord," she cried; "what am I like in my unfruitfulness! Even the fowls of the air bring forth their little ones unto Thee." As she continued weeping and praying, an angel appeared to her, consoling her with the assurance that her prayers had been heard, and that she should be given a child whom all generations should call blessed. A few months later she gave birth to the child who was destined to become the Mother of Incarnate God.

The various stories that have grown up about the parents of the Blessed Mary, beautiful as they are, and full of sweet and wholesome lessons, are not authenticated in their details, many of which are manifestly imaginative, and perhaps were never meant to be regarded as historical; but there is no reason to question the truth of the main facts recounted in the old *Protevangelium*. It was written within a generation or two of St. John the Divine, who would, of course, have known the facts.

The Emperor Justinian built a church, dedicated under the invocation of St. Anne, in Constantinople about 550, which indicates how early in the Christian era her name was known and honoured.

JULY 27

*ST. AURELIUS AND COMPANIONS, MM.*

(A.D. 852)

Through all their history the Semite peoples, especially the Jews and Mohammedans, have exemplified in a high

degree the virtue of religious intolerance. By this is meant a rigid unwillingness to tolerate what they sincerely believed to be error. But with this virtue they combined a dangerous vice. They indeed hated the sin (which every rightminded man must do), but they also hated the sinner, which is clean contrary to the principle of charity that is a part of the primitive revelation of God to man. Wherever the Jews have had power in their hands, they have been persecutors of all who differed from their religious tenets, and the Mohammedans carry the principle so far that amongst their far-eastern adherents they have made it a work worthy of a special reward in Paradise to fulfil a vow to die killing Christians.

In no age of the Christian Church has more bitter persecution been waged against the faithful than during the period when the Moors were in occupation of the Spanish peninsula. Aurelius was the son of a Christian woman and a Moor. He had been baptised, and with his wife Natalia, he secretly exercised his Faith, although outwardly they conformed themselves to the practices of Islam. They were people of high spirit, and more and more did this deception prove galling to their better selves. One day, Aurelius was attracted by a disturbance in the marketplace in Cordova, where he resided. On investigating, he saw a well-known merchant of the city laden with chains, his back bleeding from a cruel scourging, seated on an ass with his face to the beast's tail, and in this humiliating position led about for the amusement of the jeering mob. On enquiring the cause of this punishment, he was told that the unfortunate merchant was a Christian and had spoken disrespectfully of Mahomet.

Aurelius went home to his wife with his heart bowed down with shame. They too were Christians, but they were safe while the brave souls who feared not to confess Christ openly, endured such sufferings. But there were serious problems involved in their case. They had two

little girls, aged six and nine. If they suffered for their Faith, the children would fall into the hands of the Moors, who would bring them up in the false religion. Aurelius advised with Eulogius, a confessor who was in this same persecution to give his life for the Master. Eulogius counselled them to put their children into Christian hands, to sell their property, place in trust what was needed for the children, giving the remainder to the poor, and then to declare boldly that they were Christians.

As they were making their preparations to do this, Natalia had a vision in which she was visited by two virgin martyrs. They assured her that she and her husband would be given the privilege of suffering for our Lord. "But," added the vision, "we give you a sign : a monk shall lead you to your crown." Shortly after this they met a monk named George, from the monastery of St. Sabbas near Jerusalem, who had come into Europe to beg alms for his monastery, and they recognised him as the promised leader to the glory of martyrdom. Hastening to their little ones who had been placed in security, they gave them their last kiss of parental love, and delivered themselves to the officials as Christians. They were condemned to death, and George was about to be driven out of the city as a worthless tramp, when, terrified at the thought of himself losing the crown to which his resolute counsel and example had led the others, he stood before the court of the *cadi* and loudly blasphemed the False Prophet. For this crime, heinous in the eyes of the Moslem, he was instantly ordered to execution.

The holy company suffered on this day in the year of our Lord 852, and with them perished also Felix and Liliesa, his wife. These martyrs were friends of Aurelius, who had, like him, feared to confess Christ before men. Now they were eager to wipe out the stain of their sin in their blood, and the goodness of God afforded them the privilege of this happy work of reparation. The bodies of Aurelius, Natalia,

and George were taken, six years after their martyrdom, to Paris by the monks Usuard and Odilard, and placed in the Church of St. Germain des Prés, where their relics are still venerated.

JULY 28

*ST. INNOCENT I, B.C.*

(A.D. 417)

The name of this pope is associated in history with that of Alaric the Goth. This terrible barbarian appeared with his victorious armies before the walls of Rome in 408. Innocent saw his beloved people perishing by famine and pestilence, until the dead bodies encumbered the very streets. In vain did the Pope and the Senate seek terms of honourable capitulation. When told of the vast starving population within the walls, Alaric heartlessly replied, "The thicker the hay, the easier mown." On his demanding an impossible ransom for the city, the Senate replied in despair, "What then will be left to us?" "Your lives," responded the scornful Goth.

At last, the ransom paid, Alaric retired, dragging in his train a melancholy host of 400,000 captives taken in the vicinity of the city. A second and a third time within two years he reappeared before the gates of Rome, and, in spite of the heroic defence, on August 24th, 410, the city fell. Innocent was away in Ravenna, seeking aid from the cowardly Emperor Honorius, and he was spared witnessing the awful three days' pillage to which the unhappy city was subjected, but it was his privilege to be the leader in the work of restoration after the Goths had retired.

Innocent's chief contribution to the Church was in connection with the Pelagian heresy. Pelagius, a Welsh monk, whose native name was Morgan, asserted in such an extreme degree the power of freedom in the human will, that

he practically made the salvation of man independent of divine grace. The heresy flourished violently in Africa, and the African bishops requested St. Innocent to take a hand in the controversy. He took the unanswerable position that all Christian life and devotion are dead without the help of divine grace, and that this need was implied in every prayer of the Church. His powerful letter, bringing comfort and encouragement to the faithful, was almost the last utterance of his life. He died on March 12th, 417.

JULY 29

*ST. MARTHA, V.*  
(1ST CENTURY)

The feast of St. Martha falls on the octave day of that of St. Mary Magdalene, which would seem to associate the two in such a manner in the mind of the Church, as to give colour to the tradition that the latter was the same as Mary of Bethany.

Beyond the Gospel record, nothing is known of this Saint with any degree of certainty. The tradition, so long believed, that she came to Marseilles with SS. Lazarus and Mary Magdalene, was not heard of until a thousand years or more after our Lord's time. From her position in the home at Bethany she seems to have been the elder of the two sisters.

The apocryphal Acts of the members of the little Bethany household have the same interest that literature of this nature invariably has. Escaping from Jerusalem after the persecution following upon the martyrdom of Stephen, it is said they fled to Ephesus, and were there seized and placed by the Jews in an abandoned boat with neither sails, oars, rudder, nor pilot, and set afloat on the Mediterranean. It was supposed that they would perish speedily, but a

favouring gale sprang up and blew them away through the winding channels of the isles of Greece, around the south of Italy, and straight up northwards to Marseilles. The people of Marseilles, who recognised that they must be thoroughly worthwhile folk to be so signally under the protection of heaven, heard them gladly, and many conversions resulted from their labours. The most astonishing and unnecessary miracles are told of them, exploits such as taming dragons on the part of St. Martha, and extraordinary feats of aviation by her sister, Mary, who, when she was about to die, flew off to St. Maximin, by the help of the angels, and received the viaticum at the hands of that good bishop.

The contrast between these grotesque and highly decorated fables and the calm reserve of the narrative of the sweet life of the little home in Bethany, as the Gospels picture it, is startling and painful. The legends arose out of the commendable desire of the faithful to know more about the history of the Saints, and some facile story-teller thought it a pious act to see what he could do to satisfy this desire. There is sufficient fruitfulness in the lives as we know them at Bethany to afford us a lifetime of wholesome meditation, without having recourse to these.

With almost every mention of Mary in the Gospels she is at the feet of Jesus, and Martha is serving Him. We can be sure that, amidst the joys of Paradise, the one still has that good part which shall not be taken from her, while to the other is given the rich blessing promised in the Apocalyptic account of the activities of the New Jerusalem—  
'and His servants shall serve Him.'

JULY 30

*ST. JULITTA, M.*  
(A.D. 303)

St. Julitta was a wealthy and distinguished woman of Cæsarea in Cappadocia, who had occasion to bring a suit against a powerful local official for seizing a portion of her estate. Seeing that the case was going against him, in revenge he denounced her as a Christian. The proceedings were immediately suspended until this question was settled, for the Emperor Diocletian had by a decree withdrawn the protection of the laws from all followers of our Lord.

Incense and fire were immediately brought, and she was commanded to purge herself of the charge by offering sacrifice to the idols. Shocked at the sudden and disastrous turn that her case had taken, nevertheless she did not for an instant hesitate. Knowing Him in whom she had believed, and persuaded that He was able to keep that which she had committed unto Him against that Day, she replied, "May my estates perish, or be disposed of to strangers, and may my body be destroyed, rather than that I should do that which would offend my Lord. Take from me this little portion of earth, I have a sure inheritance in the heavens."

The sentence was inevitable, and her body was committed to the flames, her voice thanking and praising God until it was hushed in death.

The pagans were astonished to see a woman of her rank, age and fortune, endowed with the advantages that were calculated to bring the world to her feet, cast them all away, even life itself, for the sake of Christ. Her body was afterwards buried in the porch of the principal church of Cæsarea, and the great St. Basil declared that 'it enriches with blessings both the place and those who come to it.'



JULY 31

ST. JOHN COLOMBINI, C.  
(A.D. 1367)

This Saint was a rich and prominent citizen of Siena, who one day came home, and finding that dinner was not ready, fell into a rage and proceeded to abuse everybody about the house for the delinquency. His wife, who was a patient soul, soothed him after a time, and handed him a book to read while she hurried the meal. The book happened to be the *Lives of the Saints*, and so engrossed did he become in an account of the piety and austerities of St. Mary of Egypt that, when his wife announced dinner, he was as impatient at the interruption as he had been before at being required to wait.

Smitten in his conscience, he changed his course of life, gave away his fine clothing, dropped his fashionable and worldly friends, and devoted himself to works of mercy among the poor, turning his beautiful home into a refuge for lepers and beggars.

His distracted wife rued the day when she introduced him to the *Lives of the Saints*, but his deep devotion soon made her see things in a different light, and she realised that God had made her the instrument of a wonderful conversion.

John extended his charitable activities to every part of Italy, and founded the Jesuates of St. Jerome, so called because the Holy Name was ever on the lips of the members, and St. Jerome was their patron. This Order was a confraternity of mercy the name of which was called blessed by the poor and suffering for many generations after he was called to his reward. He died in 1367.

AUGUST 1

*ST. ETHELWOLD, B.Ab.*

(A.D. 984)

ST. ETHELWOLD was the founder of the great abbey of Abingdon in Berkshire, and later filled the see of Winchester. He was not only a Saint, but a trainer and discernor of Saints.

A charming story is told of his experience with a monk of Abingdon, Elfstan by name, who was the monastery cook. The abbot had forgotten to give him an assistant for the heavy work of the kitchen, but Elfstan made no complaint. And never had the affairs of the kitchen been in such good order. One day the abbot was making a round of inspection, and going into the kitchen, found the cook merrily at his task, with every pan and pot shining, and the floor and tables immaculate. Realising that he was dealing with a very holy man, and dismayed at his own neglect in leaving him without help in his heavy labour, the abbot cried, "O my brother, thou art a gallant soldier of Christ! Thrust thy hand into the cauldron, and bring me up a morsel from the bottom. Let me see if the Lord Christ approveth of thee as I do." Obediently the holy man lifted the lid, plunged his hand into the boiling stew and brought up a dripping crust. The abbot looked, but the heat had no power over the Saint. His hand was uninjured. "Tell no man," said the abbot, with great joy.

This same Elfstan rose by sheer holiness to succeed Ethelwold, both as Abbot of Abingdon, and as Bishop of the royal city of Winchester. St. Ethelwold was a great reformer, and did much to purify the Church of England from the abuses which had arisen. He was an artist and musician, and such was his mechanical genius that he is said to have made for the monastery with his own hands a

peal of bells known as the Golden Wheel, which was rung on great festivals.

Ethelwold died in 984, being ministered to in his last hours by the great St. Dunstan of Canterbury, whose friend and fellow-worker he was in the reform of the Church.

AUGUST 2

*ST. ALPHONSUS LIGUORI, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 1787)

The greater part of the life of this holy bishop and Doctor was passed in that century generally known as the 'dreary 18th.' As a young man, St. Alphonsus was led by sad disappointment to devote himself to the special service of God. He had first chosen for his profession the practice of law. The young lawyer prepared himself by a month of labour to plead in a certain case. When the day of the trial came, the opposing counsel ridiculed Alphonsus and held him up to scorn until the latter rushed from the courtroom amidst the jeers and laughter of the crowd.

In his room, alone with his bitter thoughts, Alphonsus resolved to forsake the world for ever. "Deceitful world," he said, "now I know thee." After being admitted to the priesthood, he devoted himself to mission work. A few years later he founded the Congregation of the Holy Redeemer, the members of which are popularly known as the Redemptorists. He desired that his sons should share his own ardent love for souls. He instructed them to preach simple sermons, saying that he never preached a sermon which the poorest old woman in the congregation could not understand. He was gentleness itself in the confessional and was opposed to heavy penances. In his old age it was his happy boast that never once in the long years of his priesthood had he sent away a penitent unabsolved. His

own sweetness and holiness so wrought upon the consciences of even the most hardened that they were brought to a genuine repentance.

AUGUST 3

*ST. WALTHEOF, Ab.*

(A.D. 1160)

This Saint was the son of Simon of Senlis, Earl of Huntington, who, losing favour with King Henry I, was banished from England. Awaiting more propitious times, he sent his family into Scotland, while he himself went on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, and died abroad. His widow became the queen of King David of Scotland, who treated the boy as his own son.

From his childhood, Waltheof desired the monastic life, and only once did his resolution waver. There was at Court a fair young girl for whom he developed a boyish attachment, and they exchanged rings. Musing one day as he sat by the fire, the thought came to him of the sin of resigning a celestial love for an earthly, however high and pure the latter might be. Plucking the ring from his finger, he threw it into the flames.

Knowing that if he sought his vocation in Scotland, he would be offered many honours which might endanger his humility, he turned his horse's head to the south, and rode far down into Yorkshire to Nostel Priory, where he became a canon regular. The fame of his accomplishments and sanctity went abroad, and he was appointed Prior of Kirkham. About this time the archbishopric of York fell vacant, and his kinsman, the Earl of Albemarle, offered to secure the appointment for him if he would make over to him a life interest in certain of the Kirkham lands. The earl, accustomed to the venal ecclesiastics of that day, was

surprised and no less edified when Waltheof indignantly scorned to secure preferment through the sin of simony.

St. Waltheof was a friend of St. Ælred, the Abbot of Rievaulx, and he used to visit him at his abbey frequently. The abbot did not know that the Saint, all the while, was longing for the stricter life of the Cistercians ; and when he learned what was the spiritual ambition of his friend, he advised him to take the habit in the monastery of Warden in Lincolnshire. But when the news of this change reached his brothers, after the genial manner of the time, they swore that they would burn Warden if he remained there, so enraged were they that one who was of his high station should assume so humble a place. The Saint then sought sanctuary at Rievaulx, but, some time after, he was elected abbot of the great foundation at Melrose, and his proud kinsmen were very well pleased at this high promotion.

St. Waltheof died in 1160, leaving behind him a memory fragrant with good works and holiness of life.

AUGUST 4

-*ST. DOMINIC, Ab.*  
(A.D. 1221)

It is related that one night the great reforming pope of the thirteenth century, Innocent III, dreamed that he saw the great edifice of the Church tottering to its fall. Suddenly two men emerged from the darkness, and held up the threatened building. Later, when St. Dominic and St. Francis came to him to ask for his approval of their new Orders, he recognised them as the figures in his dream and gladly gave them his patronage.

St. Dominic was born in Old Castile in 1170. He studied for Holy Orders, and was greatly oppressed by the heresy and corruption which he saw everywhere in the Church.

He determined to found a community of men whose work was to be the restoration of purity of doctrine and morals. So widely was the need of such an Order recognised that it spread throughout the whole Catholic world, eventually on both sides of the Atlantic.

It was said that just before his birth his mother dreamed that she had borne a dog which, snatching a flaming brand from the hearth, set the world on fire. Such, indeed, was the work of St. Dominic, and the spiritual conflagration which he set going has never ceased to burn wherever there are hearts of men and women to be won to the love and service of the Blessed Christ. St. Dominic died at Bologna on August 6th, 1221, as his brother friars were chanting at his bedside the words of the commendatory prayer, "Come, angels of the Lord, and bear his soul into the presence of the Most High." He is buried in the church of his Order at Bologna.

AUGUST 5

*ST. OSWALD, K.M.*

(A.D. 642)

Oswald was a pagan Anglo-Saxon prince who found his best and eternal good fortune in what the world counted as a supreme misfortune. Heir to the throne of Northumberland, after the defeat and death of his father he spent seventeen years in exile among the Scots. Here he learned that he was heir to a Kingdom which had no end, and in Holy Baptism his title to its crown was secured.

When he came to years of maturity, he gathered his scattered people, and undertook the reconquest of his country in a war that had the nature of a crusade. On the heights which were afterwards called 'Heaven's Field' he planted a great cross of wood, and rallying his little army to this sacred standard, he defeated the numerous battalions of Cadwallon, the British chief.

On the night before the battle, it is said that the apostle of Scotland, St. Columba, appeared to him in a dream, and spread the folds of his mantle over the little Saxon army, a sign of the protection of his prayers in the struggle of the following day.

Having secured once more his father's throne, his first thought was to ally his earthly kingdom with the heavenly. Appealing to the monks of Iona, they sent Aidan. This apostolic man accepted the task with holy alacrity, and Northumbria bowed to the happy yoke of Christ.

But this prosperity was not to continue. Cadwallon was dead, but the terrible Penda, in his pagan stronghold of Mercia, was awaiting opportunity to strike once more for his gods. Invading Oswald's kingdom, he pressed the war for two years, when, the main armies meeting on the bloody slopes of Maserfeld, the Northumbrian legions were crushed, and Oswald, in the flower of his age, fell, pierced by a sheaf of arrows. When he saw himself circled by the Mercians and overwhelmed by numbers, his last breath was a prayer for his enemies. "My God, save their souls," was the dying cry that rang out above the tumult of the battle. This prince in Israel was thirty-eight years old when he gave his life for his God and his country.

AUGUST 6

### *THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD*

The Transfiguration has been said to be the culmination of our Lord's public life, as His Baptism was its beginning, and the Ascension its conclusion.

Detailed accounts of the Transfiguration are given in all of the Gospels except St. John's, where we would not expect to find it, as history tells us that his Gospel was written to supplement the others, and, therefore, it contains but little repetition. He refers to it, however, in his

first chapter - 'We beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father.' St. Peter also, in his second Epistle, describes it. He, with St. James and St. John, were given the privilege of being present on this occasion when the glory of God, hidden beneath the veil of His Flesh, for a moment broke forth before their awed vision. This divine manifestation was timed so as to fall immediately before the announcement of His coming Passion, thus to fortify the disciples against the shock that was inevitable upon the thought of His suffering such humiliation and death.

The Gospels do not name the mountain upon which the Transfiguration took place, but historians tell us that in the early centuries, especially in Palestine, where the local tradition would naturally be more trustworthy, there is no suggestion that it occurred anywhere else than on Tabor. This has been very generally accepted. Origen, St. Cyril of Jerusalem, St. John of Damascus, St. Jerome, and a host of others of the Fathers testify to Tabor as the scene of the mystery. In fact, there was no dissentient voice until certain modern schools of criticism adopted as a basis of their work the principle that history did not begin until they arrived on the scene, and that therefore everything that came before them was suspect, and must be swept away.

The festival is oriental in its origin, and goes back perhaps to the fourth century, being first known among the Armenians. It is said by a writer of the seventh century, the Armenian Bishop Gregory Arsharuni, that it originated as a substitute for a pagan feast of Aphrodite called the Rose-flame, and that the pagan name was kept because Christ opened His glory like a rose on Tabor. Among the Armenians it is still one of the five great feasts of the year, and is kept for three days. The Greeks keep it with a vigil and an octave. The Western Church was slow to adopt it, it not being heard of in the West until about 850. Pope



Calixtus III in 1456 made it a feast of the whole Church in grateful memory of the victory at Belgrade over the Turks which occurred in that year on August 6th. Not until 1911 was it raised to the dignity of a double of the second class. The day both in East and West has been connected with the vintage. This may be the survival of the old pagan nature-festa which it replaced. Formerly on this day the priest at the Mass used either new wine or pressed a cluster of ripe grapes – the first-fruits of the vintage – into the chalice.

AUGUST 7

ST. CAJETAN, *Ab.*  
(A.D. 1547)

On this day is celebrated the feast of the Holy Name of Jesus, and the Church links with this observance the names of several of those who, in the power of that Name, wrought wondrously for the honour of God. Among these was Cajetan di Thienna, who was born in Lombardy in 1480. St. Cajetan was one of the founders of the Order of the Theatines, one of whose most distinguished members was Laurence Scupoli, the author of that great work, *The Spiritual Combat*. This Order was devoted to the cultivation of the spiritual life of the people, and was noted for the poverty and humility of its brethren.

St. Cajetan was sent from Venice to Naples to found a branch of the Order. The Count of Oppido, a pious Churchman, gave them a house, but, much distressed at the poverty of the place, insisted upon endowing it, which Cajetan would in no wise permit. "What security have you of a living?" asked the count. "What security have you?" countered the Saint. "The rents from my estates," replied the count. "But suppose the crops fail?" "But," said the count, "we trust God to send us good seasons." "Ah," exclaimed the Saint, "so it comes back to a trust

in God, in any case. He is also the root of our security." "But," urged the count, "it is all well enough to live as you do in Venice which is rich and populous ; but Naples is small and poor ; its charities cannot give you a proper support." "The God of Venice is also the God of Naples," replied the Saint ; and that settled the matter.

He died at Naples in 1547. His last words were the prayer of Daniel - 'O Lord, hear ; O Lord, hearken, and do !'

AUGUST 8

*ST. HORMISDAS, C.*

(4TH CENTURY)

The story of St. Hormisdas brings us once more to the consideration of the persecution which in the fourth century crushed the ancient Church of Persia. The Christians were placed at a moral disadvantage in the beginning, for the persecution began in reprisal for the destruction by fire of a temple by a certain Bishop Abdas whose indiscreet zeal burned more fiercely than his charity.

Isdegerdes, the Persian king, ordered all Christian churches to be destroyed, and the faithful to be subjected to torture and death. Hormisdas was a nobleman, the son of a distinguished military leader in the Persian army. It being reported that he was a Christian, he was summoned before the king, and required to deny Christ.

"Sire," he said, with great respect, "to deny thee, my earthly king, were a crime worthy of death ; how much more to deny the King of kings, the Lord and Creator of all."

The king ordered him to be stripped of his rank, and made a camel-driver in the army. One day as the troops were marching by, the king saw him, naked, scorched by the sun, covered with dust, goading on his beasts. Remembering his high estate, and pitying his condition, he sent for him, and urged him to give up his Faith. "What ! and

for the sake of mere worldly goods and honours?" exclaimed the confessor with horror. The king, seeing him immovable, banished him from the country, which penalty he rejoiced to endure for love of Christ.

AUGUST 9.

*ST. ROMANUS, M.*

(A.D. 258)

The Saint was a soldier in Rome when St. Laurence, whose feast we shall keep to-morrow, was being martyred. He was filled with amazed perplexity when he saw the joy with which that holy deacon welcomed his long drawn out torture for Christ. Such a remarkable and unearthly demonstration had to be accounted for in some reasonable way. He sought out the martyr as he lay in his agony in prison, and was told the secret of this joy in God. St. Laurence himself is said to have instructed and baptised him in his dungeon, whereupon St. Romanus, going forth, straightway proclaimed himself a Christian. The prefect was enraged at what was counted the insolence of this common soldier and ordered that his head be immediately struck off. This was said to have occurred the day before St. Laurence suffered death. Thus the disciple won his crown before the master. St. Romanus is mentioned on this day in the *Antiphonale of St. Gregory* (A.D. 590), which proves his feast to be a very ancient one.

AUGUST 10

*ST. LAURENCE, M.*

(A.D. 258)

St. Laurence, the Archdeacon of Rome, was martyred for the Faith A.D. 258. He was the treasurer of the

diocese, and on being commanded by the pagan authorities to deliver up the treasures of the Church, which were supposed to be very great, he agreed to do so on the morrow. He thereupon collected all the poor and halt and blind amongst the Christians, and when the officers came to receive the treasure, "These," he cried to them, "are the richest treasures of the Church of God."

Enraged at his mockery of them, they ordered him to be put to the torture. He was slowly burned to death over a fire placed under a great gridiron upon which he was bound. He died in merry mood, with childlike confidence in Him in whom he was trusting. He jested with his executioners, seemingly insensible to the pain. He has ever been venerated as one of the greatest martyrs of the age of the Church's persecutions. He was especially popular in England, and many parish churches are dedicated to him.

AUGUST 11

*ST. EQUITIUS, Ab.*

(ABOUT A.D. 540)

'*Misit binos* (He sent them two and two).' Such is the statement made by St. Luke concerning our Lord's method of sending the Seventy to evangelise the country of the Jews; and it is a method He seems to have continued in many instances in the history of His Church. How often is it that where one great figure arises, not far away there is another, doing his part to hold up the same burden. There were Francis and Dominic; Aquinas and Bonaventura; Ignatius and Xavier; Francis de Sales and Vincent de Paul; and near our own times, Pusey and Keble.

When the great patriarch of Western monasticism was perfecting his foundation at Monte Cassino, at the other

end of Italy in the Abruzzi was raised up St. Equitius to carry on a like work. His name means *knightly*; and with knightly courage went he forth to conquer for God. So great was his zeal that it enkindled the hearts of all with whom he came in touch, and they followed him as a leader who would surely conduct them to spiritual victory. He peopled the whole province of Valeria with holy Religious who lived dispersed in many cells through the forests, spending their time in prayer, and in the manual toil by which they secured an honest livelihood. The holy abbot visited them constantly, instructing and advising, moulding them into Saints; and in his incessant journeyings, he also did much to revive the spirit of Christ among the people of the towns and villages, preaching everywhere, as St. Francis did seven hundred years later.

All this time he remained a layman, and when certain clergy, jealous of a grace and influence which they had not even attempted to acquire, complained of his activities, the Church authorities, after investigation, gave positive orders that he was in no wise to be interfered with. His knightly soul was called to its reward about the year 540.

AUGUST 12

ST. CLARA, V.

(A.D. 1257)

Clara Sceffi was born in Assisi in Italy in 1194. At the age of eighteen she was converted under the preaching of the great St. Francis, and became the holy foundress of the Franciscan Sisters known as the Poor Clares.

In the war between the Pope and the Emperor Frederick in 1249, Assisi was assaulted by the Saracen soldiers of the emperor. They attacked San Damiano, the convent of the Sisters below the city. "My God," she cried in her prayer,

“suffer not these helpless ones to fall a prey to the barbarians, who are without pity.” She then took the Blessed Sacrament from the altar of the convent, and went with her daughters to the point of danger, preceded by the Sacrament. The invaders were suddenly seized with a panic and fled, leaving her and her convent unhurt.

After forty-two years of religious life, St. Clara fell sick of a fatal illness. She died on August 11th, 1257, rejoicing, as her spirit passed, in a vision of our Lord come to receive her, surrounded by a company of virgins, one of whom bent over and kissed her. Her body, uncorrupted, may still be seen at the church which bears her name, in Assisi. Her festival is observed on the day of her burial.

AUGUST 13

*ST. RADEGUND, Q.*

(A.D. 587)

St. Radegund was the queen of France whose name is commended to us chiefly on the ground of her connection with the beautiful Passion hymn, ‘The royal banners forward go.’ She sent an embassy to the Emperor Justin in Constantinople, and asked him to give her a piece of the True Cross, which he gladly did. The precious relic was carried with great reverence and splendour into Poitiers, and it was for this procession that Venantius Fortunatus wrote the great Passion hymn which is so much loved amongst us. This was about the year 585. Radegund was the queen of King Clothair, who treated her with shocking barbarity, and was abominably unfaithful to her. He at last gave her permission to build the convent of the Holy Cross at Poitiers, where she spent her last days in peace, dying happily amongst her Sisters in 587.

AUGUST 14

*ST. TARCISIUS, M.*

(A.D. 255)

Little is known of this Saint, but that little presents a lesson which men for seventeen hundred years have loved to repeat. He was an acolyte, a young boy, and in the Valerian persecution in 255, he was entrusted to carry the Blessed Sacrament to the Christians in the prison. He was set upon by a mob in the streets, and refused to reveal the sacred Mystery which he bore. He hastily consumed the Sacrament to save It from profanation, and sank upon the pavement weltering in his blood. One version of the story has it that he was rescued by a Christian officer, but too late to save his life. He died in the soldier's arms a martyr to the love of his Lord in the Most Holy Sacrament. A touching picture of his martyrdom is given by Cardinal Wiseman in his story, *Fabiola*.

AUGUST 15

*THE ASSUMPTION OF BLESSED MARY*

This feast was originally a commemoration of the day of the death of our Lady. It is, like most of her festivals, of Eastern origin. It is first mentioned by St. Andrew of Crete in the seventh century; and in the West, St. Gregory of Tours (A.D. 594) seems the first to record it. In the East it is called the Falling Asleep of the Blessed Virgin. There are no clear facts of history upon which the date of the feast can be made to depend. No one knows either the place of her death or the date upon which the Blessed Mother joined her divine Son in the glory of Paradise; so the date is set arbitrarily, at a suitable time of commemoration, as is the case with all the New Testament

Saints, for the death day of none of them is known. The Eastern and Western Churches unite in the observance on this date, and practically ever since the beginning of the feast of the Assumption, it has been regarded as the principal festival of our Lady.

At a very early period the devout instinct of Christian people revolted from the idea that the body which gave flesh to the Eternal Son of God should go the way of common flesh. Baring-Gould, who was no Mariolatrist, well says : ' It is repugnant to Christian feeling to think that the body of the Blessed Mother of Jesus should have become a prey to worms ; that Jesus who ascended up into heaven in His Human Body, should suffer the flesh of His Mother to see corruption. The natural instinct of the Christian proclaims the Assumption – that on the death of our Lady her divine Son should have assumed her, body and soul, to His heavenly mansions.'

While the legends which claim to give us the data regarding the Assumption are not to be accepted as authentic history, nevertheless, it must be remembered that there is nothing in the belief in the Assumption which is, from the Christian point of view, improbable or unnatural. It is universally accepted by Christians of every name, Catholic or Protestant, that the bodies of the faithful in Christ will one day rise from their graves, be reunited to their souls, and be taken up into heaven to share our Lord's glory which He had with the Father before the world was. This is what a belief in the Assumption of Blessed Mary takes for granted concerning her – this, and nothing more, except that what we shall all, by God's grace, enjoy at the end, has already been granted to her as a special privilege of her exalted position as the Mother of God.

The instinct of the Christian heart, of which we have thought, has so operated these past fifteen hundred years, that the belief that her body was taken up into heaven is now held by the Catholic Church, both East and West,



not indeed as a part of the faith necessary to salvation, nor yet as what theologians call 'certain,' but as a devout opinion to deny which would be to incur the peril at least of irreverence.

AUGUST 16

*ST. HYACINTH, C.*

(A.D. 1257)

Among those who joined the Dominican Order during the lifetime of its saintly founder was Hyacinth, a member of a noble Polish family. He first met St. Dominic in Rome, whither he had gone in the suite of his uncle, the Bishop of Cracow. After a brief novitiate, Hyacinth returned to his native land, where he established houses of his Order. But his was the soul of a missionary, so through the Baltic lands he went, on even to Scandinavia, preaching and extending the Dominican frontiers. Then eastward he turned to the vast plains of Russia. He was in Kief at the time of its siege and sack at the hands of the wild Tartars. From the general destruction, St. Hyacinth was able to escape, carrying a ciborium in one hand and an alabaster statue of the Blessed Virgin in the other. His next field of labour was among the Hungarians along the Danube, but he eventually returned to Russia. It was in the year 1257 that this flower of the Order of St. Dominic was transplanted to the gardens of Paradise.

AUGUST 17

*ST. ALYPIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 430)

St. Alypius was the bosom friend of St. Augustine of Hippo. They both had their experience with the errors of

Manichæism, but were converted to the Catholic Faith in 387, and baptised by the great St. Ambrose at Milan. After a brief time of retreat at Rome, the friends returned to their native Africa, and instituted the religious community in which the great Father of the Western Church spent the larger part of his life.

St. Alypius was consecrated Bishop of Tagaste, their native city, in 393, and he did much to support St. Augustine in his great work for the truth against the many heresies which scourged the North African Church in that age. Nowhere in literature can there be found a more beautiful account of this friendship than that which St. Augustine gives us in his *Confessions*. St. Alypius died about 430.

AUGUST 18

ST. HELENA, W.

(4TH CENTURY)

This Saint was the mother of the Emperor Constantine, and was for a long time supposed to have been a native of Britain. She was a native, however, of Nicomedia. She went to Palestine in her old age, and superintended excavations on Mount Calvary, seeking the relics of the True Cross. Those of us who have seen the wonderful discoveries lately made in Egypt will not find it difficult to believe that she succeeded in finding the Cross upon which our Lord had been crucified less than three hundred years before. The commemoration of the finding of the Cross is made throughout the Church on May 3rd. We shall not repeat here the account of this transcending event which is given under the date of that festival.

Very little is known of St. Helena, but the Church has ever venerated her as a royal matron who, in the midst of the pomps of the imperial Court, kept her heart pure for her

heavenly Bridegroom. She is said to have died when she was eighty years old, but in what year is not known.

AUGUST 19

*ST. LOUIS OF TOULOUSE, B.C.*

(A.D. 1297)

If ever man had saintly heritage it was Louis of Toulouse. St. Louis of France was his great-uncle, and on his mother's side of the family the loveliest woman of her age, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, was his aunt. He was born in Provence in 1274, and his earliest memories were those of alarms and flights, the fortunes and misfortunes of war. In 1284 his father was captured in a sea-fight by the King of Aragon. Young Louis was sent into Spain as a hostage, not to be kept in a princely captivity of honourable ease, but as a prisoner of war of whom no account was taken, and upon whom every hardship was thrust. Louis was fourteen years old when he was sent into Spain, and the adversities of his youth instilled into him a true conception of the values of life, and taught him the principles of Christian philosophy. In his sufferings his cheerfulness never failed. To his brothers he said, "Adversity is most advantageous to those who would serve God. By it we learn patience, humility and resignation to the divine will. Prosperity blinds the soul, makes it giddy and drunk, and forgetful alike of God's interests and its own."

After seven years' captivity he was released and was offered the throne of Naples. But he had long since seen the worthlessness of earthly crowns. "Jesus Christ is my kingdom," he said. "If I possess Him alone, I possess all things. If I have Him not, I lose all." During his exile he had vowed that if God would bring him home again he would give his life to Him in the Franciscan Order. The friars, however, refused to receive him, as it was thought

that he might do greater work for the Church as a secular, but his resolution was not to be withstood. Under dispensations made necessary by his youth, he took Holy Orders, and Pope Celestine nominated him to the archbishopric of Lyons. But no such easy commutation of his vow satisfied him. He might as well wear an earthly crown as to reign as a prince-bishop. He was allowed to make his profession as a Franciscan, but the pope sent him a strict injunction, under holy obedience, to accept the see of Toulouse. In this office he showed daily the spiritual heroism with which he was imbued. Those who thought the occupant of such a see should maintain his worldly dignity had not reckoned with the character of Louis. He believed that his dignity as a representative of Christ was never so well maintained as when he was visiting the sick in the public hospitals, and tending the most loathsome cases with his own hands. He preached and taught incessantly. Every corner of his diocese was visited, the poor were comforted; and everywhere he erected in the hearts of his people lasting memorials of his zeal, charity and holiness.

In 1297, while on a visit to Provence, he was seized with a fatal illness. When he realised that his end was drawing near, he said to those about him, "After a dangerous voyage I am arriving at the port which my heart has long desired. I shall now enjoy my God of whom the world has sought to rob me." He died on August 19th, 1297, being only twenty-three and a half years old.

AUGUST 20

*ST. BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX, Ab.D.*

(A.D. 1153)

The great Saint of Clairvaux was born about a mile from the city of Dijon in Burgundy in 1091. At the age of

twenty-two he entered the monastery of Cîteaux, and he did not enter alone. Called of God to the monastic life, he set about to bring with him as many as possible into the service of God. Thirty of his friends, including three of his brothers and an uncle, entered Cîteaux with him.

A story is told of Bernard's youngest brother, Nivard, who was scarcely more than a boy when his brother made the great surrender of his life to God. Standing on the castle terrace, Bernard, indicating with a gesture the broad lands of his family which stretched away on every side, said to the boy, "I go to the monastery, and all these will be yours." The youth replied, "This is not fair. You leave for me the things of this world, while you take for yourself the riches of the Kingdom of Heaven." And in a little while he followed his saintly brother into the cloister.

St. Bernard was the most outstanding and saintly figure in all Europe during his lifetime. He swayed kings and nations, and so powerful was his influence with the young that it was said that when it was reported that he was coming into a community, mothers used to hide their young sons, lest the sweet compulsion of the Saint's manner should cause them to follow him into a life dedicated to God in the monastic state.

He is generally accounted as the last of the Fathers of the Church. He died in 1153, and all Europe mourned that they would never see his like again.

AUGUST 21

*ST. BERNARD OF ALZIRA, M.*

(A.D. 1180)

This Bernard was a young Moor, who lived in Spain in the twelfth century. Once when on a journey he got lost in the woods, and, night coming on, he lay down on the

ground to sleep. It was long after midnight when he was aroused by strange music, and on looking about him, he saw a short distance away lofty pillars of ruddy light which reached almost to the tree-tops, and from amongst them came these melodious sounds, and the clear chiming of silver bells was mingled with the notes. Accustomed to the Moorish stories of magic, he supposed that he had fallen in with some strange preternatural folk, and in terror he lay still lest they should discover him and work him some harm.

What had really happened was that in the darkness he had approached the chapel of a monastery in the heart of the forest, where the services were in progress. The glowing pillars of light were the high windows, and the music was that of the Divine Office and the Mass. When dawn broke, he saw the substantial walls in the distance, and drew near to ask for guidance on his way. All within was to him very wonderful – the grey cloister, the hooded monks, the great crucifix and the figure of a fair and maidenly woman, holding in her arms a child of heavenly countenance ; and, that which filled him with a strange awe, an altar, above which gleamed a steady light which spoke of a Presence he could not understand.

He eagerly questioned his hosts as to what it all meant. "Who," he asked, "is that woman who stands bowed with grief, with seven swords piercing her bosom ; and the strange figure on the cross with nails through his hands and feet ?"

The abbot told him the story of Christ and of His Holy Mother, and his heart was moved to its depths. He remained for days, and after meditating on what he had heard, asked for baptism. And so the proud young Moorish prince became the humble monk Bernard.

After some years, his heart yearned toward the loved ones he had left behind him, and he made his way to the old family castle at Valencia. His father was dead, and his

elder brother, Almanzor, reigned in his stead. He told them of the Christ in whose service he had found such perfect freedom, and while the brother rejected his importunities with scorn and curses, his two sisters heard the sacred narrative with melting hearts. He secretly administered to them the Sacrament of Baptism, and they fled with him from the castle to find their peace in the religion whose sweet and powerful message had won their hearts. Almanzor swiftly pursued them, and coming up with them in a wood, ordered their instant execution. The holy three sealed the testimony of their faith in their blood in the year 1180.

AUGUST 22

*SS. BONOSUS AND MAXIMILIAN, MM.*

(A.D. 360)

Constantine replaced the Roman eagles with the Cross as the standard of the armies of Rome. In 360, Julian the Apostate, so called because he renounced Christianity and sought to restore the old gods, came to the throne, and ordered the Cross to be removed from the standards, and the images of Jupiter and Hercules to replace them. Two officers of the command known as 'the Old Herculeans' refused to surrender their standards for such a purpose. Bonosus was subjected to a horrible scourging, but he met the agony with a smile. He and his companion, whose name was Maximilian, were sent to prison, and bread was set before them stamped with the image of a heathen god. They preferred to starve rather than eat it. After the most refined tortures they were beheaded without the walls of Antioch. The Bishop Miletius and a great multitude of the faithful witnessed their glorious confession.

AUGUST 23

*ST. APOLLINARIS SIDONIUS, B.C.*  
(5TH CENTURY)

The life of this Gallo-Roman Saint brings before us a picture of the declining days of the Empire in the West. He was born in Lyons, about 431, of patrician blood, the son and grandson of prætorian prefects. The young Sidonius was reared in luxury and given a thorough education. So well did he employ his opportunities that he was regarded as one of the most learned and accomplished men of his day. As a poet he enjoyed a high reputation among his contemporaries. A grander field than Gaul for the display of his talents was opened to him when his father-in-law, Avitus, became Emperor of the West in the year 456. Sidonius celebrated the event by the composition of a panegyric of six hundred verses. Succeeding emperors honoured the poet, and he was for a time Prefect of Rome.

But Gaul was his home, and thither after some years he returned. Unscathed he had passed through the temptations and dangers of the great world. His home people, recognising his integrity and general ability, chose him, though a layman, to be Bishop of Clermont. As bishop he was a model pastor, faithfully feeding and tending the sheep committed to his care. He died in the latter part of the fifth century and was succeeded as bishop by his brother, St. Aprunculus.

AUGUST 24

*ST. BARTHOLOMEW, Ap.M.*  
(1ST CENTURY)

St. Bartholomew was the same Apostle whom St. John calls Nathaniel, and whom our Lord declared to be an



Israelite in whom was no guile. We know little of this Saint beyond what is told us in the Gospels, but all manner of improbable legends are recounted of him by the early Fathers of the Church. St. Jerome says he was a nobleman, but this idea became current because his name, Bartolmai, 'son of Tolmai,' caused some uncritical folk to imagine that he was descended from the Ptolemies of Egypt.

St. John tells us that he was from Nain, and St. Epiphanius makes the remarkable statement that he was the son of the widow of Nain, whom our Lord raised from the dead. It seems well authenticated that he preached the Gospel in the country north of the Caspian Sea, and that he was martyred at Albana, the modern Derbend, in that region. Tradition relates that he was flayed alive, and afterwards nailed to a cross. His symbol in art is a butcher-knife.

AUGUST 25

*ST. LOUIS, K.C.*

(A.D. 1270)

It has been said of this Saint that he knew how 'to ally the majesty of the throne with the holiness of the Gospel.' He succeeded to the throne of France at the age of twelve, and was trained up for his great responsibility by a holy mother, Blanche of Castile.

In an illness in 1244, Louis made a vow to go on a crusade, and despite the protests of his ministers, sailed for Egypt to fight against the Moslem. A landing was effected at Damietta, but many months were wasted through the unwillingness or incompetence of his leaders. Louis, though a Saint, was an indifferent soldier, and the Saracens easily led him into a trap. Disease smote the camp of the crusaders, and St. Louis exposed himself recklessly in his heroic desire to help his followers.

To

The Saracens wisely lay inactive in their camp, knowing that famine and plague were doing their deadly work in the ranks of the Christians, and finally the remnant was overwhelmed by the enemy, and the king fell into their hands. He was ransomed after great sufferings, but sailed for Palestine, to continue the war there. The death of his mother recalled him to France. In 1270 he undertook another crusade to Africa, but before anything could be done, the king died in his camp before Tunis. On the morning of August 25th he breathed his last. Shortly before the end came he cried, "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem," and with the words, "Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," he passed to his reward.

AUGUST 26

*ST. GENES, M.*

(ABOUT A.D. 300)

Genes was a Roman actor. One day in the theatre, in the presence of the Emperor Diocletian, he sacrilegiously mimicked the Sacrament of Baptism. In the play he pretended to be dying, and called for a mock-priest to baptise him. As soon as that passage in the play was ended, soldiers rushed in, and seizing him, brought him before the emperor's box for trial – all still a part of the play. But as he stood before Diocletian, his voice took on a new earnestness, and he cried, "Sire, as the water touched me, and I renounced the evil one, my heart went with the words; and I saw a great light, and the darkness of sin seemed to roll away before the clear dawn of a heavenly light." The people stood breathless, for there was evidently no mimicry in this.

That which he had acted in mockery became to him an eternal reality. The emperor, not wishing to make a

scene, rebuked him sternly, and finally ordered him to be put to the torture ; but no suffering was able to break his resolution. He was finally delivered to the executioner's sword.

AUGUST 27

*ST. POEMEN, Ab.*

(ABOUT A.D. 450)

St. Poemen was one of the greatest of the Fathers of the desert ; he was as loving as he was great ; he was as strong as he was loving ; and his strength was gentle and wise.

He is said to have gone into the desert with six of his brothers when they were all very young, and they had the faults of youth. But Poemen was wise beyond his years. Some petty quarrel having arisen amongst them, for seven days in the morning he threw stones at an old idol that remained from pagan days near their abode ; and in the evening he would kneel before it and beg its pardon.

"Why this extraordinary conduct ?" asked his brethren. "I threw stones at it," he said. "Was it angry, did it scowl ? I apologised and showed it respect ; was it pleased, did it smile ? Very well ; here we are, seven brethren. If we are like the image, unmoved by what happens, well and good. But if we are going to resent wrongs, or be pleased with flattery, let us separate, for our life is a sham."

A man came to complain of another about whom some scandalous stories were current. "Are they true ?" asked Poemen. "I have them on the best authority, on the word of a monk," replied the complainant. "Word of a monk !" exclaimed Poemen. "I should say that a monk who spread ugly stories about his brethren was no authority at all."

Another complained that the devils tempted him. "Devils, devils!" he replied. "It is always the devils that are complained of. I say, self-will, self-will."

"What is a living faith?" he was asked. "A living faith," he answered, "consists in thinking little of oneself, and showing tenderness to others."

"Do not contemplate self too long," he said. "He who does so is like one standing on the brink of a river, gazing at his reflection. He is in just the position for the devil with a slight push to tumble him into destruction."

Again: "A warm heart, bubbling over with love to God and man, is not tormented with temptations. They swarm around a cold one. You see no flies about a cauldron boiling on the fire. Set it down and let it grow cold, and it is black with them."

The date of Poëmen's death is not known, but he is said to have lived to the remarkable age of one hundred and ten.

AUGUST 28

*ST. AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 430)

This great Saint, Aurelius Augustinus, to give him his full name, was born in Tagaste in North Africa on November 13th, 354. His father, Patricius, was a pagan, who, later, came to the Faith. His mother was the holy and gentle Monica, whose life is recorded under the date of her festival, May 4th. He was educated at Carthage, and boys of the present day may find some consolation in this profound scholar's own narrative of how he 'considered the lessons of reading, writing and ciphering no less a burden and a punishment than Greek.'

While studying at Carthage, his enquiring mind dipped into all the wells of philosophy, with the result that he

imbibed many false doctrines, amongst others being that of the Manichæans, who believed that material matter was essentially evil. This belief always leads logically to vice. If the body is essentially evil, in any event, then it cannot be worse than it is, and one may as well let it take its course. It is not surprising, therefore, that Augustine, as a youth, fell into ways of sin, the memory of which in after years made him one of the Church's great penitents.

In 384 he went to Milan to teach rhetoric. There he fell under the strong and benign influence of the great St. Ambrose, and a profound dissatisfaction with his mode of life ensued. Like Saul of Tarsus, the Holy Spirit was urging him on, and he found it hard to kick against the pricks. But it was no easy thing to give up his old life. He tells us that he used to pray, 'O God, make me pure,' and then the weakness of the flesh would add, 'but not yet.'

The account of his conversion and that of his friend Alypius (August 17th) is one of the finest things in any literature. He tells that, in tears and anguish of spirit, he went into the garden, and flung himself upon the grass, crying, "How long, O Lord, how long! Why is there not at this hour an end to my sin?" Instantly, he heard, as it were from a little distance, a voice like a child's, calling again and again, "*Tolle et lege* (Take up and read, take up and read)." Taking up a scroll of the Epistle to the Romans, his eye fell upon the words, 'Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.' By this message did the Holy Spirit establish His work in his heart. He gave up his professorship in the schools, and on Easter Eve, April 25th, 387, he was baptised by St. Ambrose.

St. Augustine made immediate preparations for his return to Africa, and it was while he was with his mother

at Ostia, awaiting a ship, that the holy Monica sickened and died. In accordance with her direction, she was buried in Italy, and he shortly afterwards proceeded on his voyage. He founded a monastery in Hippo, as well as a convent for nuns. His sister presided over the latter, and it was for them that he wrote his famous *211th Epistle*, which is the basis of what has been called the Augustinian Rule. This Rule is still observed by multitudes of holy men and women all over the Catholic world, although the Saint himself founded no Religious Order in the modern sense of the term.

He was shortly afterwards made Bishop of Hippo, and here he spent a ministry of forty years, with indefatigable zeal and industry devoting his transcendent genius and vast learning to the maintenance and defence of Christianity. During this long period he was in the forefront of every battle for the Faith, and there were many. A powerful and skilful antagonist, against whom few dared to enter the lists, none the less he never failed to sweeten his attacks upon heresy and heretics with that love and gentleness which were more convincing than even the cogency of his arguments.

St. Augustine lived in the days when, under the assaults of successive hordes of barbarians, the old Roman Empire was tottering to its fall. In 410 Alaric sacked Rome, and the world stood aghast at the paralysing spectacle of the fall of the city which all men had thought to be eternal. St. Augustine at this time wrote what is perhaps his greatest work, *Of the City of God*, to show that there is but one abiding City, eternal in the heavens, whose Builder and Maker is God.

In 428 the Arian Vandals invaded North Africa, and laid siege to Hippo, where many of the faithful had flocked to escape the devastation wrought by these barbarians. Augustine's last days were devoted to giving consolation to these exiles. He died on August 30th, 430, while the

powerful armies of Genseric were battering at the gates of the city to which he had so long been a father. His call home came in his seventy-seventh year.

AUGUST 29

*ST. SEBBA, K.C.*

(ABOUT A.D. 697)

This Saint is said to have been a King of the East Saxons about the year 664. He was a pagan, but was converted under the ministry of St. Erconwald, Bishop of London. He was one of those happy monarchs who saw deep into the counsel of the Wise Man who said, 'If your delight be then in thrones and sceptres, O ye kings of the people, honour Wisdom, that ye may reign for evermore' (Wisdom vi. 21). And so, hearkening to the call of the divine Wisdom Incarnate, he resigned his crown into the hands of his sons, after a reign of nearly thirty years, and taking the religious habit, he entered a monastery to prepare his soul for its last passage. It was said that the deceptions of the tempter caused him to look forward to the hour of death with terror; but his steadfast contemplation of the tender mercies of God, 'whereby the Dayspring from on high hath visited us,' speedily converted these fears into a longing, joyful hope. He made his happy passage in 697, in an ecstasy of holy joy, ministered to at the last by his friend St. Waldhere, Bishop of London. It is said that three days before his death he received a divine premonition that the heavenly translation was at hand.

His tomb was pointed out in old St. Paul's Cathedral until that church was destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666.

AUGUST 30

*ST. ROSE OF LIMA, V.*  
(A.D. 1617)

The name of Rose of Lima is of especial interest because she was the first American to be canonised. Her home was in the capital city of Peru in the days when the viceroy of the Spanish king ruled there. Her parents were people of moderate means, and after the death of her father, St. Rose earned a living for herself and her widowed mother as a seamstress. At this occupation she laboured for ten hours a day. But this heavy toil did not distract her mind from God. As her patron and model, she chose that other saintly virgin, St. Catherine of Siena. Like her, St. Rose became a member of the Third Order of St. Dominic. Again like her patroness, St. Rose experienced a mystical betrothal to the Infant Jesus. One day as she returned from Mass, her heart thrilling with celestial joy, she cried out, "O all ye green things of the earth, bless ye the Lord!" As she did so, the trees began to quiver and to clash their leaves together, the flowers praised their Creator in the hearing of His spouse.

In the year 1617, when she was but thirty-one years old, St. Rose was summoned to enjoy the unending pleasures of the home of her divine Bridegroom.

AUGUST 31

*ST. AIDAN, B.C.*  
(A.D. 631)

St. Augustine is honoured with the title of Apostle of England. It was, however, only the southern part of the



kingdom which owed its conversion to the exertions of the Italian monk. To St. Aidan and his fellow Celtic labourers from Iona is to be accredited, under God, the conversion of the northern English. The first mission sent to Northumbria from the great island-monastery of Iona proved a failure. A monk named Corman headed the mission, and he devoted much of his energy to depicting the sufferings of the damned, and warning the Angles to flee from the wrath to come, instead of showing them a heavenly Father whose heart was full of love for His children. The Northumbrians were a sturdy folk, and not easily frightened, and they gave such little heed to Corman's appeals that he went back to Iona and reported them as hopeless savages.

The brethren were gathered to consider what was to be done, when Aidan arose, and spoke so sweetly of the need of gentleness and loving persuasion in the work of winning souls that everyone cried out that he was the man whose words could surely win them. Making his missionary centre at Lindisfarne on the east coast, Aidan and his companions with unwearied zeal applied themselves to the great mission. King Oswald (August 5th) lent all the force of his royal power to the work, often himself acting as interpreter while the monks were learning the language, and the people by thousands flocked into the Kingdom of Heaven.

But 'ill Penda,' the Mercian, pagan king, once more invaded the land, spreading fire and slaughter everywhere. Oswald was defeated and slain at Maserfeld in 631, and twelve days later St. Aidan followed him to his reward. But his work lived after him. Never again did Northumbria turn to idols, and the great English Church of the north, with its multitude of Saints, rejoices in the heavenly intercession of the great apostle who so sweetly and courageously taught her fathers the saving Faith.

SEPTEMBER 1

*ST. GILES, Ab.*

(8TH CENTURY)

ONE day Childebert, King of the Franks, was following the chase in the forests of the Rhone, near where that river falls into the Mediterranean. Having started a doe, the hunters followed hard after until they saw her about to enter a cave. They shot an arrow at her, and on coming up to the place, they found within the cave an aged, white-haired hermit sheltering the terrified animal, with a wound in his own shoulder. So impressed was the king at the sight that he let the doe escape unharmed, and resolved to build a monastery for the hermit where he could serve God, and give like pious opportunity to others. Thus was St. Giles enabled to set on foot the great work which God had called him to do. His fame went all through Europe, and amongst his patrons was Charles Martel, whose military prowess turned back the Moslem armies from spreading over all western Europe.

The abbey of St. Giles became, under his fostering care, and the subsequent protection of his prayers, one of the great monastic foundations in Europe. It was, during the Middle Ages, one of the chief pilgrim shrines of the West, and about it grew up a town which became famous in later history. So marked was the devotion to St. Giles in England that no fewer than one hundred and fifty churches were dedicated to God under his invocation. His exact date is uncertain. He died some time during the first third of the eighth century.

SEPTEMBER 2

*ST. WILLIAM OF ROSKILDE, B.C.*

(A.D. 1076)

The story of St. William is one of a great love between a Christian king and a holy bishop. William was an Englishman who acted as chaplain to King Canute, whom he accompanied to Denmark. He was filled with compassion at the sight of the idolatry and superstition of the Danes, and received permission to remain in the country and evangelise them. A close friendship sprang up between him and King Swend. The king was so impressed with the holiness of the Saint that he had him appointed bishop of Roskilde in 1044. Swend had the heart of a little child, but he was not untouched by the vices of his time, and often in the interest of righteousness he would adopt methods which smacked more of the religion of Thor than of Christ. One New Year's Eve, when there had been much drunkenness at the royal table, he sent some of his bodyguard to slay certain men who had offended him, and who at the time were engaged in hearing Mattins in the church. The bloody crime was perpetrated in the sacred edifice in full view of the altar.

Swend himself started to the church a little later to hear Mass. William came down from the altar in his pontificals, and barred the door against the king with his pastoral staff, saying, "Stand back, thou executioner!" The king's guard rushed up, their swords still stained with the blood of the sacrilegious murders, and would have employed them against the bishop, but he overawed them with the intrepidity of his attitude as he barred the way. Swend turned back to his palace with head bowed down, and in an excess of penitence he stripped off his royal robes, and barefoot he came to the church door, and flung himself on the

ground. The bishop, hearing that the king was at the door, went to him, raised him up, absolved him, and told him to put on his royal robes and to return. Swend went up to the altar, and in the presence of all the people confessed his crime.

Swend died in 1076. When St. William heard of his death he had a presentiment that his own end was near, and that he would not be long separated from his friend. Swend, who was greatly beloved by his people, was borne through the forest to the church where the Saint waited to receive his body for burial. As the funeral cortège approached, the old man laid himself down under the trees, and lifted up his prayer to God that he might not be long separated from the king. As nearer and nearer drew the sad procession, and the solemn chant of the *De Profundis* sounded through the forest aisles, he prayed the more earnestly. God heard his petition, for when they came to the place where the old man lay, his spirit had fled. 'They were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided.'

#### SEPTEMBER 3

#### *ST. MACNISS, C.*

(6TH CENTURY)

Ængus Macniss was the son of Nissa, an Irish chieftain, and is said to have been baptised by St. Patrick (March 17th), and educated by St. Olcan. In common with many other Irish Saints, he has many strange stories attached to his legend. Having neglected his work one day, Olcan's mother slapped him, whereupon the lady was taught whom she was presuming to slap by her arm being made rigid. However, the Saints are not to be held responsible for the extravagant stories told of them by misguided chroniclers.

A much prettier legend is the sweet story of Colman, whose father slew his own father, and who, in accordance with the ancient Irish law for the punishment of parricides, was condemned to lose his son. The soldiers who were executing the sentence threw the child into the air in order to receive him on the points of their spears as he fell. But Macniss, who was present pleading for mercy, raised his hands in prayer, and a powerful gust of wind wafted the child into the arms of the Saint, whose claim to him was recognised. Colman was adopted by St. Macniss, and in after years became Bishop of Killruaidh. St. Macniss died early in the sixth century.

SEPTEMBER 4

*ST. MARCELLUS, M.*

(A.D. 178)

This Saint was martyred near Lyons in the persecution under Marcus Aurelius in the year 178. He sought safety in flight, as our Lord enjoined under such conditions ; but when arrested, he scorned any subterfuge, and courageously declared himself a Christian. Priscus, the governor, was a just man, and refused to give him to the executioners on his own confession, but afforded him every opportunity to defend himself before the lawful tribunal. Convicted, he was buried in the earth up to his waist, and left to die of starvation.

During the time of his flight, and while in confinement in prison, Marcellus showed his great love for souls ; and knowing that his time was short, he lost no opportunity of telling the message of the love of God to those with whom he was thrown. As the result of his importunity, many were led to the feet of Christ, although at this particular juncture they knew that to declare themselves Christians was tantamount to issuing their own death warrant.

SEPTEMBER 5

*ST. DAVID OF RUSSIA*  
(A.D. 1015)

In 1015, on the death of St. Vladimir, the heroic prince who founded the Church of Russia, the fiercest civil war broke out, owing to the eldest son seeking to secure the patrimony of his younger brothers by a series of shocking murders. Having slain his brother Boris, he laid his plans to seize David, a young man of singular devotion and purity of life. He invited him to receive his hospitality, which David accepted. Himself thinking no evil, it did not occur to the Saint that his brother could be guilty of such treachery. Warned too late of his peril, the holy youth fell beneath the daggers of hired assassins. Fearful of the consequences of his act, the unnatural brother had St. David's body concealed in a deep wood. The rude peasants of the country told a story of a pillar of light that glowed in the forest by night, while those who came near to see the wonder heard the chords of a strange, unearthly psalmody. Investigation discovered the uncorrupt body of the Saint, over which a cohort of angels kept vigil.

SEPTEMBER 6

*ST. PAMBO, Ab.*  
(4TH CENTURY)

St. Pambo was a monk of the Egyptian desert. When a young man, he went to the great St. Anthony and asked him for some counsel by which to guide his life. St. Anthony replied, "Never trust in your own merits. Never trouble yourself about transitory things. Keep a check

on your stomach. Learn to hold your tongue." Pambo followed these directions, and became a Saint and a teacher of Saints.

When he first undertook to become a monk, he went to one of the elders to learn the psalter. His teacher began with the thirty-ninth Psalm – 'I said I will take heed to my ways that I offend not in my tongue.' On hearing these words, Pambo arose and left abruptly, not coming back for further instruction for six months. On being chided, he replied, "That verse was quite enough for six months. Indeed, I have not mastered it yet."

Blessed Melania, herself a Saint, visited the monasteries of the desert. When she came to see Pambo, so edified was she that she presented him with a chest containing three hundredweight of silver. Without interrupting his work, or so much as looking at her, he directed one of the brethren to distribute it to the poor. St. Melania waited for a little time, and, a bit hurt at not even being thanked, said, "But, father, do you realise that here is three hundredweight of silver?" "My daughter," replied Pambo, "the Lord to whom you make this offering knows very well how much it weighs without being told. If you give it to Him who did not despise the widow's two mites, and even preferred them to the great presents of the rich, say no more about it."

St. Pambo died at the age of seventy. His soul went to God without sickness or pain.

SEPTEMBER 7

*ST. CLOUD, Ab.*  
(A.D. 560)

Everybody knows St. Cloud, the famous suburb of Paris. Few know how this resort of the worldling of to-day got its

saintly name. St. Cloud was the grandson of Clovis and his holy queen, St. Clothilde. The widowed queen set great store by her three grandsons, whose father, Clodomir, the King of Orleans, had been killed in battle. This aroused the jealousy of their uncles, who had two of them barbarously murdered when they were at the tender ages of seven and nine. Clodald, or Cloud, who was the third, escaped. So shocked was the young boy at the methods of those who seek worldly power, that he determined to renounce all desire for the world. He went into Provence, and began his life as a hermit. He desired no earthly crown, which in that hard age would surely lead him along a pathway of blood ; but he sought one that was eternal and peaceful in the heavens.

His neighbours in Provence paid little attention to him. Hermits were not unusual in those days, and some of them were no better than they ought to be. His tenth-century biographer tells a pretty story of how the Provencals found him out. One day a beggar asked of him an alms. Having nothing else to give him, he bestowed upon him his cloak. As the beggar walked into the neighbouring village in the dusk of the night, the cloak shone on his back like the glow of a lamp. Thus did the simple folk learn that it was no ordinary man who had come to dwell among them.

He later returned to the vicinity of Paris, and his uncles, who no longer feared for their power, built and endowed for him a monastery at the place since called by his name. He died about the year 560, when he was only about thirty-five years old. In art he is represented with nails, and he is regarded as the patron of nailmakers, through a pun on his name, *clou*, in modern French, meaning a nail.



SEPTEMBER 8

*NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY*

Like so many of the Church's festivals, the celebration of this day arose in the East. The first references to it date from the sixth century. While not of very early origin, it has for more than a thousand years been observed everywhere in the Christian world. About 690 a litany and procession were prescribed for this day by Pope Sergius I, and Innocent IV gave it an octave in 1243. So greatly is the Nativity of our Lady honoured amongst the Copts and Abyssinians, that their Churches commemorate it twelve times in the year, on the first day of every month. Their principal feast of her Nativity is on May 1st, and the solemnity is continued for thirty-three days under the name of the feast of the 'Seed of Jacob.'

This feast of the Nativity has more recently taken on a new and universal significance by the organisation of the Association for the Promotion of the Reunion of Christendom, which was founded in 1857. It was entered into heartily by the Eastern Orthodox Churches, and received the approval of Pope Pius IX, although later on this approval was withdrawn. The sole obligation of the members is to say the collect for unity – 'O Lord Jesus Christ, who saidst to Thine Apostles, Peace I leave with you, etc.' – and to observe this feast with its octave as a special time of prayer for the reunion of Christendom.

The meaning of this festival is found in the fact that the Church celebrates only three birthdays, that of our Lord, of His Mother, and of St. John Baptist, all of whom came into the world under some special condition of sanctity not common to mankind.

Our Lord being Incarnate God, conceived and born of a Virgin, sinless and incapable of sinning, since God can

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do no wrong, His birthday is necessarily one of the Church's greatest and holiest commemorations.

St. John Baptist was sanctified from his mother's womb, that sanctification having taken place, according to the general opinion, on the occasion of the Visitation of the Blessed Mother, when in the presence of the unborn Christ the infant Baptist leaped for joy in the womb of his mother, St. Elisabeth.

The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin is celebrated because she, by a singular privilege and grace granted by God in view of the merits of Christ, was, in the first instant of her conception in her mother's womb, preserved from all taint of sin. She came into the world sinless, not as a child of wrath, but as already a child of God. Through the merits of her Son working by anticipation, she was, in her conception, placed in the same state, so far as sin was concerned, as is the soul of the ordinary Christian in Baptism. Her redemption, thus by anticipation, was the supreme masterpiece of Christ's redeeming love and wisdom.

Therefore the Church everywhere in the world celebrates her birthday with great joy, because on this day one came into the world in whom the prince of this world had nothing, and in whom dwelt the fullness of the divine perfection in a manner and degree unknown in any other human soul in history, excepting always the soul of her divine Son.

SEPTEMBER 9

*ST. PETER CLAVER, C.*

(A.D. 1654)

We are rather inclined to think that benevolence and philanthropy came into action near to our own time. That this is a grave mistake is proven by the life of Blessed Peter Claver, who lived three centuries ago. This holy man

was a Spaniard and was born at Verdu in 1581. Feeling called to give himself wholly to God, he entered the Society of Jesus, an Order founded by another Spaniard, Ignatius of Loyola.

When, as a priest, Peter was sent to work at Cartagena, the great slave-market of the New World, his heart was touched by the woes of the poor black wretches, torn from their African homes, and for forty-four years he devoted himself to their salvation.

No matter how exhausted or weary he might be, as soon as he learned of the arrival of a slave-ship, he was all energy and activity. As soon as possible, he was on board the vessel, comforting and tending its pitiable, frightened cargo. His cloak he was continually lending for covering some poor shivering body. After his heaviest labour, he found his sweetest rest in prayer and penance. Such a life could not be without its results, and it is hardly surprising to learn that Blessed Peter was the means of bringing three hundred thousand negroes into the Church. This indefatigable servant was called to his rest in 1654.

#### SEPTEMBER 10

*SS. MENDORA, METRODORA AND NYMPHODORA,*  
*VV. MM.*  
(A.D. 305)

These Saints were three young virgin sisters who lived in Bithynia. They were orphans, and avoiding the corrupt society of their day, they found their happiness in serving our Lord in obscurity. But the fame of their beauty and virtue, and especially the fact that they were of the hated Christian profession, soon went abroad, and they were summoned before Galerius, the governor. He addressed them gently, asking of their country, and their faith, and

their lineage, to which they replied frankly but modestly, concealing nothing.

"My children," said the governor, "do not neglect your noble opportunities and gifts. Let me be a father to you. I will protect you, and provide for your welfare, and my gods will watch over you." They replied, "We are not ungrateful for your kindness, noble Galerius, but all we ask is to live in retirement and serve our Lord."

The governor reasoned with them, offering them every honourable inducement, but to no avail. Nothing could shake their invincible resolution to devote their lives to the loving service of the true God.

Angered at their firmness, which he called a diabolical obstinacy, he delivered them to the tormentors. We shall not harry our feelings by recounting the details of their sufferings. Tortured with fire and torn with hooks, they endured with eyes fixed on heaven, no word coming from their lips, save the constant prayers in which they prayed for their inhuman captors. Death brought them merciful relief. These brides of Christ suffered for His Name's sake in the year of His Redemption, 305.

#### SEPTEMBER 11

*ST. PAPHNUTIUS, Ab.*

(ABOUT A.D. 330)

Paphnutius was one of the three hundred and eighteen bishops who sat in the great Council of Nicæa in 325, which gave to the Church her Creed, which we call by the name of that council. He was a very aged man at the time, and had suffered cruel tortures in the last of the persecutions under Diocletian. He came to the council to bear his witness against the heresy of Arius, and was a marked figure as he came and went among the brethren, dragging

a useless leg which was paralysed as a result of his tortures. Amongst the heretics he saw his old friend, Maximus of Jerusalem. This old man had fought a good fight for Christ in the persecution, which was testified to by the empty socket of his eye, which had been torn out by the tormentors in their vain endeavour to make him deny his Lord. Maximus was no theologian, and had been induced to sit among the Arians by the specious persuasions of the heretic. When Paphnutius saw him, he went over to him and said : " Maximus, who fought with me in the same conflict, I cannot bear to see thee sitting in the seat of the ungodly and standing in the way of sinners." And taking him by the hand, he led the simple-hearted old man to where the adherents of the true Faith were gathered. The date of the death of this Saint is not known, but it must have occurred a very few years after the council.

SEPTEMBER 12

*ST. AILBE, B.C.*  
(6TH CENTURY)

This Saint was an Irish bishop who lived about the year 500. Nothing authentic is known of him, but the multitude of beautiful incidents told of his life, however unhistorical they may be, gives testimony to the profound regard that men had for his wisdom and holiness. He was a kind of Irish St. Francis. It is said that he was the son of an Irish prince, and that his mother was a slave-girl. His father, at his birth, ordered him to be exposed in the forest that he might be destroyed by the beasts. A she-wolf, so the old legend goes, took him to her den, but instead of killing him she suckled him along with her cubs. A huntsman one day alighted on the den, and to his amazement found in it a beautiful child, which he took away, the

she-wolf following, growling and snapping at his cloak. Years afterwards, when the boy had become a bishop, an old, gaunt wolf, hard pressed by the hunters, took refuge with him, and he recognised her as his old foster-mother. He protected her, and like St. Francis' wolf at Gubbio, she came daily to be fed at the bishop's hand, and under his gentle influence, she forgot her savage nature, while no hunter dared to lift his spear against her.

SEPTEMBER 13

*ST. EULOGIUS, Ab.*

(A.D. 605)

He was a monk of Syria, and was made Patriarch of Alexandria in 579. He was a friend of St. Gregory the Great (March 12th), and the correspondence he had with this pontiff contains several passages which are of primary interest to us as Anglicans. In one letter he tells St. Eulogius of the success of St. Augustine's mission to England, 'among the race of Angles settled in an angle of the world.' St. Gregory was ever an incorrigible punster. It was in correspondence with St. Eulogius that Gregory gave expression to his famous repudiation of the claim to have universal jurisdiction. Eulogius had addressed him as 'universal bishop.' Gregory replied, 'Away with those words which inflate vanity and wound charity.' St. Eulogius survived his friend, St. Gregory, by one year, making a happy death in the year 605.

SEPTEMBER 14

*ST. CORNELIUS, B.M.*

(A.D. 252)

St. Cornelius was Bishop of Rome about the year 252, and although he wore the martyr's crown in one of the persecutions of the Church by the pagan emperors, his chief sufferings in life came from persecution by those who called themselves Christians. During his pontificate a priest in Rome named Novatian not only taught some dangerous heresies, but because Cornelius would not assent to his false faith, rallied a party, set himself up as bishop, and made a dangerous schism in the city. His doctrines were not unlike some heresies nearer our own time. He was in principle a Puritan, and taught that if a man sinned wilfully in a serious matter there was no hope of forgiveness, which was a definite denial of the effects of our Lord's work of Atonement on the Cross, and a contradiction of His words – most comforting to poor sinners – 'Him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'

But the gates of hell could not prevail against the Church. The Novatian heresy was overthrown, and internal peace was restored. But the crown of reward which was prepared for the bishop was close at hand. Under Gallus he was exiled, and finally sealed his testimony for the Faith in his blood. He died by the sword in 252.

SEPTEMBER 15

*ST. CATHERINE OF GENOA, W.*

(A.D. 1510)

This Saint, though earnestly desiring the Religious Life in her youth, was, by a family arrangement, married to

Julian Adorno, a dissolute young nobleman of Genoa. As might have been expected, her life was unhappy, and when her husband, penitent and converted, died, she was free to fulfil what she had always been convinced was her vocation, to serve God's poor. From having been a shy, retiring girl, she developed into a business woman of great ability, organising important works of charity with marked success, and for many years acting as head of the great city hospital in Genoa.

But her administrative labours have not been her greatest warrant to fame. In all the rush and stress of business, she never lost for a moment the consciousness of our Lord's presence, and her natural love for souls grew and developed as she ministered with her own hands to the sick and dying. Those who came under her tender ministrations were, in most cases, the poor and outcast, and not infrequently they were men and women of criminal and abandoned life. Here lay her opportunity, and by her gentle ministry and loving patience and instruction, she led many to penitence, and those who had lived lives of crime died holy deaths.

No one in such a position could fail to be confronted with that ever-perplexing question of the state of these souls in the next world. Penitent they were, but their souls bore the scars of many sins. Were they dealt with beyond the grave in the same manner as the souls who had devoted their whole life to God in faithful service?

St. Catherine's meditation and prayers on this problem produced a treatise on Purgatory which seemed wellnigh a miracle. An unlearned woman, her little book on the state of the departed has taken its place as a classic in Catholic theology. No one writes on Purgatory without first studying it, and Cardinal Newman based his great religious poem, 'The Dream of Gerontius,' on her teaching. Through suffering, souls are made perfect, but it is a suffering which brings ineffable joy.

'It would be impossible,' she wrote, 'to find any joy



comparable to that of a soul in Purgatory except the joy of the blessed in Paradise, a joy which goes on increasing day by day as God more and more flows in upon the soul, which He does abundantly in proportion as every hindrance to His entrance is consumed away.'

Thus is the soul purified, restored and made ready for heaven, into which blessed place it comes as soon as it is made perfect. St. Catherine's book is a tiny brochure, and has been translated into English. It is a very sweet comfort to those who mourn for loved ones departed.

This Saint died in 1510, being sixty-two years of age.

SEPTEMBER 16

*ST. CYPRIAN, B.M.*

(A.D. 258)

Cyprian was already in advanced years when he was converted from paganism. He was a man of considerable note, and followed the profession of rhetoric in the great city of Carthage. Though late in coming to the Faith, when he did come, it was with his whole heart. He sold his estates in order to give the money to the poor. So impressed was the Christian community by the evident sincerity of his conversion, that in a short time after his baptism Cyprian was elected Bishop of Carthage.

His life and conduct were worthy of that high dignity. On the breaking out of a severe pestilence, he devoted himself to the care of the suffering, regardless of creed. This endeared him to the people. The good will of the poor, however, could not protect their benefactor from the operation of the Roman law, and according to that law, the profession of Christianity was a crime.

In the year 258, the Emperor Valerian ordered that all Christian clergy should be punished with death, and

Cyprian was one of the first to be arrested. When the news went abroad, all the city, pagans and Christians alike, poured forth into the streets. There was no sleep in Carthage that night. A dense throng blocked the streets, some praying, and all crying for mercy for their beloved benefactor. When the death sentence was pronounced, the crowd in the streets roared, "Let us die with him."

On reaching the place of his triumph, he laid aside his mantle, and clad in a white garment, fell on his knees in prayer, while a vast concourse of weeping people stood black against the neighbouring hillsides. Binding a napkin over his own eyes, and holding his hands for a priest to tie, he awaited the sword-stroke which was to give him his crown. He suffered on Holy Cross Day, September 14th, in the year of his Lord, 258.

St. Cyprian is commemorated in the Anglican kalendar on September 26th, through a mistake which resulted in confusing him with another Saint of the same name who was martyred in Nicomedia, A.D. 304, and whose feast is observed on that day.

#### SEPTEMBER, 17

#### *ST. HILDEGARDE, Ab.*

(A.D. 1179)

St. Hildegarde was the daughter of a noble knight who was in the service of the Count of Spanheim. She was born in 1098, and entered the convent of Disibod at the tender age of eight. Her entrance into the cloister did not mean that she was lost to the world, however. She lived in a cruel and corrupt time, and the courage which she inherited from a long line of chivalrous ancestors drove her to bend her efforts, fearing no man, for the purification of her age. In her letters, which were couched in a jumble of

Latin and German, she denounced kings and nobles, popes, priests and prelates. So fearless was she, and so unvarnished the truth she proclaimed, that the most powerful of rulers, civil and ecclesiastic, hesitated before arousing her noble wrath. There was an element of humour in the situation always. More than once, powerful bishops whose hands were not overclean ventured to reprove her tactfully, and were sent flying by a withering blast of counter-rebuke.

But as is so often the case, along with this stern temper there was something very sweet and engaging in this Saint. If she denounced, she also prayed, and those against whom she directed the vials of her righteous anger knew well that she prevented the night watches on their behalf. St. Bernard of Clairvaux admired her greatly. When he was preaching the Crusade on the Rhine, she ascended Feldberg, the loftiest of the Rhenish hills, and prayed for his success with arms lifted up to heaven until she fainted through exhaustion.

St. Hildegarde died in 1179, and was buried in her convent church.

SEPTEMBER 18

*ST. JOSEPH OF CUPERTINO, C.*  
(A.D. 1663)

This saint was an Italian who as a youth made many efforts to become a religious, but he was so stupid that all the Orders to which he applied sent him away. Finally, the Franciscans, seeing the genuine holiness of his life, made shift to accept him. But they might well have rued their bargain, for Joseph became such a miracle-worker, and so great were the throngs that came to the monastery, that the life of the brothers was quite broken up. The superior therefore forbade his working any miracle without permission for each case.

Many marvellous stories are told of him. It is said that one day St. Joseph was watching some men at work on the wall of a high building, when one of them fell. He was about to be dashed to death on the pavement, and the Saint naturally desired to save him, but like a good religious, he would do nothing without permission. "Stay where you are until I get leave to work a miracle," he shouted to the falling man, and dashed off to the monastery, which was close by. The man hung in mid-air until his return, when he let him down unhurt to the ground. Father Rickaby, the learned Jesuit, cites this as the kind of story about the Saints which good Roman Catholics may doubt without rashness. St. Joseph died in 1663, crying, "Victory, victory."

SEPTEMBER 19

*ST. THEODORE, B.C.*

(A.D. 690)

This Saint was Archbishop of Canterbury in 664. He was a Greek monk, and was born in Tarsus, and was therefore a fellow-citizen with St. Paul of 'no mean city.' He was living in Rome when the death of Archbishop Deusdedit caused a vacancy in the primatial see of the English Church. He was sixty-six years old when he went to the confines of the western world to begin what proved to be his great life-work. 'The history of the Church,' says Baring-Gould, 'presents few spectacles more imposing and more comforting than that of this Greek of Asia Minor, a countryman of St. Paul's, a mitred philosopher, and almost a septuagenarian monk, journeying from the shores of the East to train a young nation of the West, disciplining, calming and guiding all those discordant elements, the different races, rival dynasties and new-born forces whose

union was destined to constitute one of the greatest nations of the earth.' For twelve years he was indefatigable in his missionary labours, and the great administrative and organising work which he accomplished endures to-day. It was he who divided England into dioceses and parishes in the manner which has come down to our present time. He is to be ranked among the great fathers and founders of the English Church and nation. He died in 690.

SEPTEMBER 20

*ST. EUSTACE, M.*

(A.D. 118)

St. Eustace was a distinguished Roman general under the Emperor Trajan. He bore the name of Placidus before his conversion. He perhaps is the original of a very moving story that has been attached by a credulous age to the legend of many Saints. Once when hunting in the forest, a stag came boldly towards him, and as it drew near, he saw between its antlers a cross upon which hung the agonised figure of a man, and a loud voice cried, "Placidus, Placidus, I am Jesus Christ; why dost thou persecute Me?" Like Saul of Tarsus, with a broken and contrite heart, the proud officer fell on his knees, a converted man.

Rejoicing in his new-found life, he boldly declared his conversion, which so enraged the emperor that he sent him to the death of the stake. His wife, Theopista, who followed him into the Church, perished with him. They suffered in the year 118. St. Eustace was a favourite subject with the mediæval painters. Albert Dürer's engraving of this subject is famous. The same story concerning the stag is told of St. Hubert, and both of these Saints are regarded as the patrons of hunters.

SEPTEMBER 21

*ST. MAURA, V.*

(A.D. 850)

St. Maura was born at Troyes in Champagne in 827. She should be regarded as the patron of altar guilds, for the old chronicles tell us that it was the delight of this young girl not only to make the priestly vestments for the altar, but with her own hands to keep the sacred lamps alight, and to prepare the altar for the celebrating of the Holy Mysteries.

St. Maura was one of the many Saints who fulfilled St. Paul's description, 'unknown, yet well-known' – unknown to men, but glorious in the sight of God, and indeed 'hid with Christ in God.' She lived a quiet and retired life, serving God in her simple way, and her sanctity shone out especially in the last hours of her earthly pilgrimage. Her great devotion was the prayer our Lord Himself has taught us. Fortified with the Sacraments of the Church, and full of divine joy and love, she died on this day in the year 850, at the age of twenty-three. Her last words were the cry of triumph, "Thy kingdom come."

SEPTEMBER 22

*ST. THOMAS OF VILLANOVA, B.C.*

(A.D. 1555)

At a time when Spain was full of a very terrible external zeal for the Faith, which expressed itself in the ferocious activities of the Inquisition, but when true religion was at a low ebb, God raised up this Saint to show the world by a life of singular devotion what the character of Christ was like.

Thomas was born in 1488 in Old Castile, that land which gave to the Church a multitude of its greatest Saints. He had the privilege of being reared in a devout household, and was given a liberal education. After receiving his degree, he was appointed professor of philosophy in the university of Salamanca, but in 1518 he gave up this post of academic distinction to become a simple Augustinian friar. Ordained to the priesthood two years later, he began a life of evangelical fervour which won for him the title of 'Apostle of Spain.'

He rose almost immediately to offices of responsibility in his Order, and those who had the care of the government of the Church began to cast covetous glances in his direction. He managed, however, to evade the burdens of ecclesiastical administration until 1544, when he became Archbishop of Granada. The Emperor Charles V had been asked to nominate someone for this see, and in a conference with his secretary about it, the name of Thomas was suggested, but the suggestion dismissed, as the emperor was sure he would decline the honour. The secretary, however, misunderstood the direction given, and wrote the name of the Saint in the documents which were being prepared. When he would have corrected it, the emperor said, "No, let it stand. I see the hand of God in this mistake."

Granada had not in centuries seen such a bishop. The chapter of the cathedral gave him four thousand ducats with which to furnish his house. He received them with great gladness, but immediately sent them off to be given to the poor. He visited every corner of his diocese with incessant devotion, preaching, administering the Sacraments, relieving the poor, consoling those in trouble, ministering to the sick and dying, and all with a sweetness that won every heart.

The revenues of his diocese were large, but he kept practically nothing for himself, giving away everything

with a lavish but not injudicious hand. He constantly exhorted the wealthy noblemen and burghers to be richer in mercy and charity than in worldly goods. "If you desire God to hear your prayers," he would say, "do you hear the voice of the poor. If you desire God to forestall your wants, forestall those of the suffering without waiting for them to importune you."

For ten years he set such an example as living men had never seen. He died on September 8th, 1555. In his last hours he had St. John's account of the Passion of our Lord read to him, and Mass was celebrated in his room. After the consecration, he recited Psalm xxxi., 'In Thee, O Lord, have I put my trust,' with tears of devotion, and having received his Lord with great joy, he cried, "Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit," and yielded up his soul. He was sixty-seven years of age.

#### SEPTEMBER 23

*ST. ADAMNAN, C.*

(A.D. 704)

North Ireland, which has for several centuries been a bitter Protestant stronghold, was for many ages the nursing mother of a multitude of Saints. Among these was Adamnan, who was born in 624. Like most Irishmen, he claimed – or there was claimed for him by legend-mongers – descent from the ancient Irish kings. Adamnan thought more, however, of the favour of the heavenly King than of tracing his lineage to pagan chiefs. He embraced the monastic life under his famous kinsman, St. Columba, and went with him to Iona, where he himself was later made abbot.

St. Adamnan was an indefatigable missionary. He preached in both Scotland and Ireland, and made at least



one journey into the north of England. He was also a prolific writer, being best known as the biographer of his spiritual master, St. Columba. He has the high distinction of being perhaps the first man in the British Isles to write a book on the Holy Land, by which he gave the first incitement to our forefathers to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. It seems that a certain Frankish bishop, named Arculf, made the great pilgrimage, and on his return voyage was shipwrecked. In the course of his odyssey he came to Iona, and gave St. Adamnan a full account of what he had seen at the Holy Places. The holy abbot committed the account to writing. Many copies of the book were made, and it became a very popular treatise in the Middle Ages.

The lesson in the Aberdeen breviary, giving an account of his life, tells a sweet story of how on one occasion he did not appear in chapel for the monastic office. His brethen, fearing that the old man was ill, went to his cell, and found him in an ecstasy, having had a vision of the Holy Child surrounded by dazzling light. St. Adamnan died in 704.

SEPTEMBER 24

*ST. GEREMAR, Ab.*  
(A.D.658)

Geremar was born near Beauvais in France early in the seventh century. He was of noble extraction, and in his early manhood was a courtier in the palace of King Dagobert. He was married and had two sons, but, his wife having died, on the advice of St. Ouen of Rouen, when his eldest son became of age he made over to him all his property and retired to the abbey of Pentale.

The age in which this Saint lived, especially in France,  
WG

seemed wanting in the ordinary types of men and women. So far as history gives any light on the subject, it would seem that everyone was either a Saint or a very evil liver ; and all the evil folk did not stay outside the cloister. Being raised to the post of abbot, the strictness of Geremar's rule did not please some of his monks, and in those days not infrequently they employed somewhat peremptory means of getting rid of an unpopular abbot. So in this case they fastened a long keen knife-blade upright in Geremar's bed, so that, when he flung himself down to rest, it would pierce his body. Perhaps the abbot had his suspicions, but, in any event, he found the knife and removed it before lying down.

Discouraged at this indication of his unpopularity, he left the monastery, and began the life of a hermit in a cave. Shortly after this, he received the news of the death of his son. The old man raised his arms to heaven, and, his face shining with joy, cried aloud, " O good God, Thou hast been merciful towards me in deigning to receive my son into Thy glory." St. Geremar died about the year 658.

SEPTEMBER 25

*ST. CEOLFRID, Ab.*  
(A.D. 716)

This Saint was the friend and disciple of St. Benedict Biscop at the abbey of Wearmouth, and was a native of Northumberland. He was for twenty-six years the abbot of the monasteries of Wearmouth and Jarrow, and such was his learning and sanctity that not only was he consulted by bishops and kings, but about 701 the Pope sent messengers to Wearmouth to secure his advice on some grave questions of Church policy.

In his old age Ceolfrid was seized with a desire to visit

once more the tomb of the Apostles Peter and Paul, in Rome, and to yield his soul to God in that holy place. His brethren sought to dissuade him, but in vain. On June 4th, 716, the Saint made his departure. The monks, some six hundred in number, assembled in the church for the last blessing of the holy man. A procession was formed, and with chanting and prayer, broken by the sobs of the brethren, they conducted him to his ship, bearing lighted tapers and a golden cross.

It was as the brethren had feared. His strength failed him, and God called him home when he was near the city of Lyons in southern France. He did not see the tombs of the Apostles, but God gave him a better thing – life for ever and ever in their blessed company in heaven.

SEPTEMBER 26

*ST. NILUS, C.*  
(A.D. 1005)

This Saint lived in south Italy. Like many another Saint, he was kind and gentle to the poor, but had a rough tongue for the people who set themselves up in the world, especially if they pretended to be good Christians and were not. He had a great reputation for wisdom, and on one occasion he was visited in his hermitage by the Archbishop of Calabria and Duke Leo of that region. They did not come for spiritual edification, but to try the old man with some sharp questions to test his reputed wisdom. One of the luxurious retinue that attended them asked the old man, "Father, tell us, was Solomon saved or not?" "Whether Solomon was saved or not," replied the old man, "matters little to you; the question you had better interest yourself in is whether you are going to escape damnation for your sins."

The Emperor Otho once visited him, and Nilus received him with great honour, going out with his monks in procession to greet him. The emperor, who was not a bad man for his times, said to him, "Our Lord bade His disciples to go out at first without money or scrip ; but as he drew near to His Passion, He commanded them to take both purse and scrip. You, my Father, in youth went forth poor and destitute for the love of the Lord ; but now, in your age, take the presents and dignities that I offer you." It was gracefully put, but St. Nilus refused all presents, and laying his hand on the emperor's breast, he said, "Sire, I ask one thing of you. Remember your responsibilities as a king of men. For the welfare of your people you will have to give an account to God. Remember that. I ask no more." The emperor offered him the bishopric of Rossana, his native town, but he refused it. He died in 1005 at the advanced age of ninety-five.

SEPTEMBER 27

*SS. COSMAS AND DAMIAN, MM.*

(ABOUT A.D. 297)

These Saints were brothers, natives of Arabia, who suffered for the Faith at Egæa in Cilicia. They were physicians, and were said to be much skilled in their art, and practised it amongst the poor without charge. Their distinguished charities exposed them to observation when the persecutions broke out, and they were summoned before the court of the governor. After the cruel custom of the times, they were put through many tortures, but nothing that the barbarous ingenuity of the governor could devise was able to break the strength of their Christian spirit.

It is significant that in nearly all the accounts of the persecutions in the early Church the local magistrates are

seen to be most reluctant to condemn their Christian neighbours, and tried in every way, by torture as well as persuasion, to induce them to renounce their faith. It was made easy for them to deny Christ. The authorities were content with the slightest gesture which could be interpreted as a recantation. The case of these martyrs was no exception, but no word or act could the most excruciating pangs wring from them which could for a moment be construed as an indication that they were shaken in their faith. They were finally beheaded. The fame of these Saints was greatly extended in Europe by the fact that they were the patrons of the great Medici family in Florence in the fifteenth century.

SEPTEMBER 28

*ST. WENCESLAS, M.*

(A.D. 929)

All are familiar with John Mason Neale's Christmas carol beginning,

Good King Wenceslas looked out  
On the feast of Stephen ;

but it is not everyone who knows that the hero of the carol is a real, historical person. The story of the page who amidst the cold of the winter night found reviving warmth by placing his feet in the footprints which the Saint made in the snow is hardly historical, but it presents the true ideal of St. Wenceslas, and the Church has for just a thousand years rejoiced to number him amongst her Saints along with that Stephen on whose feast he looked out.

St. Wenceslas was the Duke of Bohemia, or Czecho-Slovakia as it is called to-day. St. Wenceslas sprang from

a strange union. His father was a Christian man of a kindly, loving spirit, but his mother, while not a pagan, as some writers have averred, was a woman of a bold and cruel temper, ready to do anything in order to carry out her evil designs. On the death of her husband she seized the reins of government, ignoring the claims of her son who was the rightful heir. Wenceslas was compelled to lead an army against her, and by a signal victory he recovered his patrimony.

Though defeated, the mother of Wenceslas was not crushed. By her intrigues she secured the alliance of her second son, Boleslas, and it was at the hands of this unnatural brother that the Saint met his death. He was kneeling, as was his wont, before the Blessed Sacrament, when the murderous blow was struck. It was at the hour of midnight on the feast of St. Michael in the year 929.

SEPTEMBER 29

### *ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS*

Do you know in what way we got the feast of the Archangel Michael on September 29th? It happened on this wise, so the ancient traditions tell us. About the year 492 a wealthy cattle-herder who lived near Manfredonia in Italy, Gargon by name, lost a valuable bull. On search being made for it, it was found in a cave, wounded with an arrow. There seemed to be much mystery about the affair, and Gargon, being a devout man and a friend of the bishop of the place, asked that a triduum of prayer be kept to ascertain what it meant.

Before the three days had expired, St. Michael appeared to the bishop, and told him that the cave where the bull had lain was sacred to him, and demanded that a church be

built over it. This the bishop did, and it was consecrated on September 29th. The story of the bull is not to be received as historical, but it is a fact that about that year the church of St. Michael on Mount Gargona was consecrated with such splendour that the imagination of the whole Christian world was impressed by the story of it, and the day of consecration was adopted as the principal feast of the angel as we have it today in the kalendar.

St. Michael has always profoundly impressed the imagination of the Catholic Church, and he is the only one of the archangels whose commemoration has been retained in our Prayer Book kalendar. Although St. Gabriel is the angel of the Incarnation, no day is assigned in his honour. St. Michael is mentioned in the New Testament by St. Jude as protecting the body of Moses from Satan, and in the book of Revelation he is said to have been the leader of the celestial armies in the war in heaven which followed upon the rebellion of Lucifer. In the book of Daniel, in the Old Testament, he is represented as the guardian angel of the Jewish nation.

He has been specially honoured in the Church from the beginning. No fewer than twelve festivals are kept for him in our time in various parts of Christendom. The Greeks commemorate him on November 8th, and the Copts keep a triduum in his honour on June 6th, 7th, and 8th. Among the Abyssinians the 12th of every month of the year is consecrated as a feast of St. Michael.

SEPTEMBER 30

*ST. JEROME, C.D.*  
(A.D. 419)

This Saint was a man of extraordinary versatility and genius. He was the greatest Bible scholar of antiquity,

and the first to translate the entire Bible into Latin, which was at that time the ordinary speech of the common people throughout a great part of southern Europe. His translation is known as the Vulgate, from its being in the vulgar tongue, and it is still the Authorised Version of the Roman Catholic Church.

About the year 385, St. Jerome quitted Rome and took up his residence in Bethlehem. He became a great monastic leader, but he did not lose touch with the Church in the West. He was constantly consulted by the authorities, and when he was not consulted, he did not hesitate to volunteer his advice, which no one resented, but rather welcomed, in so great honour was he held.

Like not a few of the Saints, he had a rough tongue, but a loving, tender heart, and no man ever had a clearer view of the true values of life. A friend wrote and congratulated him on the happiness of living at Jerusalem. 'It is not living in Jerusalem that counts,' he replied, 'but living well in Jerusalem.'

He was a hammer of the heretics, and, with the possible exception of St. Augustine, perhaps no one of the Fathers did so much, and with such aggression, courage and learning, for the defence and maintenance of the truth against the multitude of false teachers who flourished in his time.

His tender spirit is shown in his letters to those whose spiritual life he was directing. His intimacy with St. Paula, a Roman lady who lived in the monastic state at Bethlehem, is one of the most beautiful spiritual friendships recorded in the annals of Christendom. His letters to St. Eustochium, St. Paula's daughter, after her mother's death, are the classical evidence of the practice of Invocation of Saints in the early Church. He was an inveterate letter-writer, and through his voluminous correspondence kept in touch with the life of the Church in every part of the world.



He died in Bethlehem on September 30th, 419, and was buried near the cave of the Nativity in the ancient basilica, where his tomb can still be seen. He is counted as one of the four great Doctors of the Western Church, the other three being St. Augustine of Hippo, St. Ambrose of Milan and St. Gregory the Great.

OCTOBER 1

*ST. REMIGIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 533)

It is a widespread popular error that on the conversion of Constantine the triumph of Christianity was assured. At the beginning of the year 496 there was scarcely a single Catholic ruler in Christendom. In Italy, in Africa, in Spain, in the south of France, the Arians, who denied the eternal Godhead of our Lord, were in power. It can therefore be seen how important was the conversion in the year 496 of the powerful Frankish king, Clovis. It was St. Remigius, the Bishop of Rheims, who instructed and baptised this noble heathen.

Remigius himself came of an illustrious Gallic family. At the unusual age of twenty-two he was raised to the episcopate, and Clovis, although a heathen, regarded him with great reverence, and gave him protection as he went about the work of the diocese. In 496 the Suevi and the Alemanni invaded the Frankish dominions with a great army, and on the field of Tolbiac the battle turned against the king. His infantry was crushed, and the cavalry over which he had assumed personal command was broken and fleeing. In this crisis, Clovis bethought him of the God of his devout queen, Clotilda, who had long sought to bring him to a confession of Christ. Crying out to heaven, he pledged himself that if God would give him deliverance he would accept the Faith. In a brief time the tide of battle turned, and the German tribesmen were in full flight before the victorious Franks.

The king sent for Clotilda, who brought St. Remigius with her. When Clovis saw her, he cried, "Clovis hath vanquished the Alemanni, but thou hast vanquished Clovis."

St. Remigius immediately set out to prepare the king for baptism, and the sacrament was administered in the cathedral of Rheims. Even at that early day the great church at Rheims was a glorious temple. For so great an occasion as the baptism of the most powerful of the barbarian kings, all the splendour of Catholic worship was displayed. Dazzled by the moving spectacle, Clovis enquired of the Saint, "My father, is this the Kingdom of Heaven of which you have told me?" "Nay, my son," answered the holy man, "this is but the entrance to the road that leads to it." Along with the king, or shortly after, three thousand of the Frankish cavaliers submitted to the Church, and the Frankish nation became the Catholic nucleus of the West.

Under the protecting ægis of the Frankish power, Remigius went through the land, preaching everywhere the Gospel of the Catholic Church, converting and baptising the pagans by thousands, overthrowing their idols, and transforming their shrines into Christian churches. Much of his activity was directed against the Arians, and he won many converts from heresy by the gentleness of his temper and the cogency of his arguments. He well deserves the title of 'the Founder of the Church of God in France.' He died on January 13th, 533, in the ninety-fourth year of his age, having worn the episcopal purple for three score and twelve years. In 1049, Pope Leo IX held a council in Rheims during which the body of the Saint was translated from St. Christopher's Church to the church of the Benedictine abbey in that city, and his feast since that time has been observed on the day of this translation.

OCTOBER 2

*ST. THOMAS OF HEREFORD, B.C.*

(A.D. 1282)

In the happy days when England was the 'Island of the Saints,' St. Thomas of Hereford shone amongst the foremost of her holy sons. He was the son of Baron William Cantilupe, and was born in 1218 near Marlow on the Thames. He was devoutly reared and his studies were directed by his uncle, Walter, Bishop of Worcester. The bishop asked him one day what profession he wished to follow. The boy, like all other boys, had been thrilled by the glitter and show of the military pageantry he saw about him, and he replied, "I want to be a soldier." "Thou shalt be a soldier indeed," replied the bishop, "but a soldier of Christ, and thine armour shall be the vestments of the priest."

Thomas was sent to Paris to study theology, and on his return to England he settled at Oxford, and eventually became chancellor of the university. In 1275 he was consecrated Bishop of Hereford. He was devoted to the sick and poor, and on one occasion, being reproached by a wealthy nobleman for spending so much time amongst them, the Saint replied with a dry humour, "But, you see, I shall have to give an account to God for the poor of my diocese as well as for you rich folk."

He wore conspicuously that blessed mark of the Lord Christ which consists in a devotion to little children. In the Middle Ages, when so many bishops spent their time basking in the favour of the king at Court, the sacrament of Confirmation was sadly neglected in England. But this Saint was never happier than when like our Lord he could take the little ones up in his arms, put his hands upon them and give them the blessing of this sacrament.

St. Thomas went on a pilgrimage to Rome in 1282, and

while there he was seized with a mortal illness. As he was raised up on his bed in the arms of his brethren, he repeated with great fervour the hymn, 'Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,' and cried aloud, "By the sign of the Holy Cross, deliver us from our enemies, O God!" Then he murmured, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit, O Lord, Thou God of truth," and repeating softly the words, "I commend my spirit," he breathed his last.

His body was brought back to England and laid in Hereford Cathedral. Since his time, the arms of the diocese have been those of the Cantilupe family, in honour of the Saint.

OCTOBER 3

*THE BROTHERS EDWALD, MM.*

(A.D. 695)

The Venerable Bede relates the story of two young Englishmen, brothers, who, after having lived in Ireland for a number of years, were incited by the Holy Spirit to go into Germany, after the example of St. Willibrord, to see if perchance they could win for Christ some souls from among the pagan folk.

Settling themselves in a certain place, they were content for a time to spend their days and nights in prayer, offering each morning the Holy Mass, to the end that God would give them many souls for their hire. Then they sent word to the prince of the country, saying that they had a message to deliver which it would be to his advantage to hear, and asked for an audience. But the barbarian people, finding their prince favourable to giving the strangers a hearing, and fearing the wrath of their gods, seized the brothers and put them to death. One they slew immediately, but the other they put to a long and horrid torture, thinking thus to placate the old deities.

The prince was by no means pleased when he learned how his benighted subjects had presumed to protect him from the supposed magic of the strangers, as though he did not have a mind of his own ; and all who were engaged in the murder were put to death. With one of those sudden revulsions of mind characteristic of savages, the people began to venerate the martyrs who had so willingly given up their lives for their Faith, and many marvellous and beautiful stories began to be told through the country about them. It was said that the place where the mangled remains of their bodies were concealed was marked by a broad shaft of ruddy light which shot down from heaven and, penetrating the darkness of the forest, discovered their resting-place. Whatever credence may be given to the old legends, there is no doubt that these holy brothers won more souls in death than they had done in life, and they illuminated the history of the land of their adoption by the glory of their example.

These things happened in Westphalia about the year 695. The relics of these Saints were translated to Munster in the eleventh century, but they were destroyed when the Anabaptists of that city sacked the churches in 1534.

OCTOBER 4

*ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI, Ab.*

(A.D. 1226)

Strange that in an age like our own, given over as it is to a passion for getting, the ' Little Poor Man of Assisi ' should be the most popular of Saints. Perhaps this devotion arises out of a subconsciousness of guilt. St. Francis was born in 1182 of a wealthy Umbrian merchant family, and in the days of his youth he enjoyed all the frivolous pleasures which his father's means procured for him. An

illness brought him to a consciousness of the vanity of earthly things. Enamoured of the chaste beauty of Holy Poverty, he resolved henceforth to live as God's poor man.

Insult and reviling was his reward. His father, counting the family disgraced by his son's mode of life, publicly disowned him, and the very children in the streets cried after him in ridicule as he passed by. But he went merrily on his way, no man in the world happier, because free from all worldly care and ambition and filled only with an ambition to be a servant of God. The joy of his heart was contagious. As he came and went on his continual journeyings, thousands felt their spirits kindled by contact with him, and desiring to share his holy joys, followed him as his disciples ; and those who scorned him lived to kneel at his feet and crave his blessing.

He had no intention in the beginning of his work of founding a Religious Order, but out of his following grew, of necessity, an organisation, the great Franciscan Brotherhood or as he, in his humility, loved to call them, the Friars Minor. During his own lifetime the Friars spread to the ends of the earth. Filled with his spirit, which was the very spirit of Christ, they settled themselves in the seething slums of the great cities, they preached to the scornful Saracens of Egypt and the East, and died martyrs' deaths at their hands, full of grateful joy that this privilege was accorded them. They ministered to the poor black slaves of the plantations of the Spanish Main, and wherever misery of soul and body could be found, there they served Christ in His suffering poor.

St. Francis, like unto his divine Master in spirit, was made also like unto him in body. Two years before his death, on the feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross, while praying in the solitude of Mount Alvernia in Tuscany, our Lord appeared to him under the form of a seraph nailed to a cross, and impressed upon his hands and feet and upon his side, the marks of His Passion. Very literally was he able

now to say, "Let no man trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."

St. Francis died on October 4th, 1226, at Assisi, crying, "Welcome, Sister Death !"

OCTOBER 5

*ST. PLACIDUS, Ab.*

(A.D. 541)

There are few stories of the Saints which have more delightful charm and appeal than that of the young boy Placidus. His father was a Roman Christian named Tertullus who, mindful of the perils of the corrupt world of his day, desired to save his little son from its snares, and asked St. Benedict to receive him into his monastery at Subiaco. This was done when the boy was about seven years old.

The devotion which existed between the old man and the child was very beautiful, and recalls the bond which knit together the heart of St. Patrick and that of his young disciple, Benignus, in Ireland two centuries earlier. Placidus went with the holy founder to Monte Cassino when that great foundation was made a little later. Indeed, tradition says that the site of the mother Benedictine abbey was given to St. Benedict by the devout Tertullus.

Only one incident has been preserved of the early life of St. Placidus. It is said that, having been sent to a neighbouring lake to fetch some water, he slipped on the precipitous bank and fell in. St. Benedict was in his cell, and saw from a distance what had happened. He called to Maurus, another little oblate of equal sweetness of character with St. Placidus, gave him a blessing and urged him to hasten to the rescue. Maurus ran with all his might to the lake, and without for a moment thinking of the danger to himself, rushed out upon the water and drew his little companion



to safety. It was not until he had returned to the shore that he realised that he had walked upon the surface of the water without sinking. St. Benedict declared that the marvel was to be attributed to the unquestioning obedience of Maurus, but the young novice insisted that it was the virtue of the old abbot's blessing that brought the wonder to pass.

A pretty legend indeed, and which of us will dare assert it to be untrue? For if the promise that the angels will bear us in their hands and deliver us is ever to be fulfilled, surely it will be when the trusting innocence of childhood acts in perfect obedience with no thought of the peril that might intervene.

OCTOBER 6

*ST. BRUNO, Ab.*

(A.D. 1101)

St. Bruno was a native of Cologne. He was trained for the Church, and excelled in the usual courses of philosophy and theology at Paris. On returning home, he received many ecclesiastical preferments, after the custom of his time. He was devout and upright, but it looked at one time as though he would not be very different from the ordinary better-class cleric of his day. Among the many benefices he held was a canonry of Rheims, where he went to reside; and it was the corrupt conduct of the bishop at Rheims that caused a violent reaction, and aroused to the fighting point all that was good in the young canon. But reform seemed hopeless, and sick at heart over what he saw in high places in the Church, he determined to abandon the world, and with six friends who were like-minded, he set out to find a solitude where he could serve God.

At this time Hugh was Bishop of Grenoble. While on a

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visitation to the mountain country of his diocese, he had discovered a wild spot in a wooded valley, shut in by snow-clad ranges and approachable only by a narrow road along the dizzy brink of a precipitous ravine. So impressed was he by the austere beauty of the place that he visited it in his dreams. In a vision upon his bed he thought he stood in the valley as the afterglow of the sunset was kindling the highest peaks with its ruddy light. As he looked, he saw rising along the green slopes a fair monastery in whose cloisters walked a company of grave men, clad in habits of white, while above the towers in the darkening sky there hung, like a coronet on the brow of night, a cluster of seven splendid stars.

Hugh was still wondering what the dream might mean when, on a summer day in the year 1086, seven men appeared at his palace, and kneeling for his blessing, asked him to show them some retired spot where they could serve God in vigil and prayer. It was Bruno and his companions, fleeing from the evil of the world. The holy bishop was scarcely able to believe the evidence of his senses that God was bringing to pass the thing he had so long prayed for and dreamed of. He lost no time in guiding them to the valley of the Chartreuse, which was destined in the purpose of God to see the planting, at the hand of Bruno, of one of the greatest Religious Orders the Holy Spirit has ever raised up in His Church.


But it was not to be Bruno's privilege to enjoy for long the sweets of solitude and his life of quiet prayer. Six happy years went by, when one morning a messenger, booted and spurred and grimy with the dust of a long journey, reined his horse at the monastery gate and delivered a letter for the abbot. One glance at its contents shattered the repose of the Saint's heart for all time. It was a summons from the pope to repair to Rome to devote his energies to the wider service of the Church. Urban II had been a pupil of Bruno's, and, hard pressed to find good

men for the papal Court, he had sent for his old master to come to his aid.

Calling the brethren together, Bruno broke to them the distressing news. Their resolution was quickly made. Believing that God had called them to dwell together for His glory, they would not be separated. If one went, all must go. Sadly they turned their backs upon their beloved valley, and Bruno, silent for grief, as they passed down the steep roadway turned to look for the last time upon the gleaming snow-peaks and the dark beauty of the forest upon which his eyes were never to rest again.

They were received in Rome with every mark of honour, but amid the distractions of the great city, they longed for the cool stillness of their mountain home, where there was no sound but the solemn thunder of the distant avalanches, the harping of the wind in the pines and the echoing bell calling them to prayer. Bruno pleaded with the pope to be set free, but his pleading was in vain. He was not willing, however, that all should suffer because of him. Appointing Lantwin to be their prior, he sent them back to their haunt of peace to find in that solitude the fulfilment of the life which had been denied to him.

Bruno remained in Rome for several years, and was finally permitted to retire into Calabria, where he lived a life of solitude at Torre. He died in 1101, being scarcely fifty years of age. In art he is represented contemplating a crucifix, with a scroll bearing the words from the fifty-fifth Psalm which so touchingly express the unfulfilled longing of his heart — ‘*Ecce, elongavi fugiens, et mansi in solitudine* (Lo, I would get me away far off, and remain in the wilderness).’



OCTOBER 7

*ST. OSYTH, V.M.*

(7TH CENTURY)

This holy woman was the daughter of a Mercian prince, and the granddaughter, on her mother's side, of Penda, the fierce pagan king who for so many years harried the Church in the north. Her parents were Christian, but their devotion did not extend so far as to induce them to consent to her wish to give herself to God in Holy Religion. They betrothed her to Sighere, a young neighbouring prince. A splendid marriage feast was prepared, but just as the nuptials were about to be celebrated, a magnificent stag bounded by the church. The prince was an ardent lover, but still more ardent in his devotion to the chase. He sounded his horn, mounted his horse and galloped off after the game. Osyth saw her opportunity, and with some of her maids, she fled the place. When Sighere returned, he found that he had exchanged a bride for a stag. Osyth took refuge with a neighbouring bishop, who gave her the veil. Sighere proved to be of a philosophic turn of mind, and instead of massacring the bishop and his household as many a young blood of his time would have done, he decided that it would be more for his peace of mind to let the young woman have her way. He therefore gave her some lands at the mouth of the River Colne, where she lived for many years an edifying life of devotion in her convent.

A Danish invasion gave the Saint her martyr's crown. The pirates landed on the coast hard by, and sacked the convent church. When they attempted to carry off Osyth to their ships, she resisted so vigorously that in a rage her savage captors struck off her head with a sword. She received her crown in the last years of the seventh century.

OCTOBER 8

*ST. THAÏS, Penitent*  
(4TH CENTURY)

Thaïs was a courtesan of Alexandria in Egypt, whose alluring charm and beauty had caused deadly strife amongst her lovers in such a fashion that their blood lay at her door.

Paphnutius, the aged hermit of the neighbouring desert, heard how this beautiful sinner was bewitching the youth of the city, and his heart was filled with sadness and with a longing to save her from the perdition into which she was most surely flinging herself. Making his way to her luxurious house, he came into the room where she lay on a gorgeous couch.

“Let everyone depart,” commanded the old man.

“There is no one here save us two,” said Thaïs.

Again the hermit commanded, “Let all depart.”

“There is no one else here, unless it be God,” answered the woman.

“What !” cried Paphnutius with great vehemence.

“Do you know that there is a God ?”

“Surely, I know it,” replied the courtesan, “for I was brought up a Christian.”

“And do you know that there is a heaven for the righteous, and a hell for the ungodly ?”

“I know it,” she said, as her voice faltered and broke.

The hermit then lifted up his voice in a loud and exceeding bitter cry : “O my God, my merciful God, she knows Thee, and what Thou hast laid up for them that serve Thee ; and yet has she slain many poor souls who might have rested in Thy glory through eternity, but who must now wail in endless woe !”

Thaïs, trembling with terror, threw herself at the feet of

the holy man and cried, " My father, my father, show me a way of escape ; teach me how to repent ! "

Paphnutius led her to a cell in a convent of holy women, and commanded her not so much as to lift up her hands to heaven, but to turn her face towards Jerusalem, where Calvary was, and to say only, " Thou who hast made me and redeemed me by Thy Passion, have mercy on me."

After a time, Paphnutius consulted St. Anthony as to the further care of the woman's soul, and Anthony bade his monks betake themselves to prayer for his guidance. And as they prayed, one of them, Paul by name, slept, and in his sleep a vision came to him of a place of wondrous glory prepared in heaven very near to the throne of God. And he asked, " Is this place so glorious made ready for my father Anthony ? " Then a voice replied, " Not so ; it is for Thaïs, the penitent."

OCTOBER 9

*ST. DENYS OF PARIS, B.M.*  
(3RD CENTURY)

This Saint was long supposed to be identical with Dionysius the Areopagite, who was converted under the preaching of St. Paul at Athens, but this has been shown long since to be an error. That he was the apostle of Paris about 280 seems to be fairly well established. A vast amount of groundless legend has grown up about his memory. That he was martyred by the pagan Parisians seems undoubted, but, however we may admire M. Bonnat's great picture of the event in the Panthéon in Paris, we are not required to accept the old story that when his head was struck from his body he picked it up and ran two miles with it from Montmartre where he suffered to the present site of the Abbey St. Denys. This tale, like the one of the Irish martyr who

swam the channel carrying his head in his teeth, may safely be dismissed to the realm of fiction. Devout Catholics are not required to believe it.

France of the *ancien régime* had a great devotion to St. Denys, and the abbey outside the gates of Paris which bears his name was the burying-place of the French kings for many generations. Here, too, was kept the sacred Oriflamme, the standard which was brought out when the king went forth to war. There was a curious tradition that the old battle-cry, 'Montjoie Saint Denys,' originated with Clovis, who, when he was baptised, shouted, "Mon Jouvain Saint Denys!" that is, "My Jove shall be St. Denys!"

St. Denys is commemorated in company with SS. Rusticus and Eleutherius, who are said to have suffered with him. They were first cast into a furnace, but, like the Hebrew children in the book of Daniel, they came forth unscathed. The supposed bodies of these martyrs were preserved in a splendid silver shrine in the Abbey St. Denys until the French Revolution, when they, together with the bones of the royal family interred there, were removed. A monk named Warenfolt saved the relics of St. Denys, and they were restored to the church in 1819.

#### OCTOBER 10

#### ST. PAULINUS OF YORK, B.C.

(A.D. 644)

St. Paulinus was the first of the long line of the Archbishops of York. In 625, Ethelburga, the daughter of the Christian king of Kent, was married to Edwin, the king of Northumbria. The condition of the union was that the queen should be free to practise her own religion; and Paulinus went with her as her chaplain. His first care was to convert the king. Gathering his thanes about him,

Edwin enquired of them whether they were willing to give a hearing to the new faith. One of them stood forth, and said, "Often, when at night thou, O king, and thy men are gathered in the great hall of the castle, a bird flies in from the night. He circles about the hall, and flies out again into the darkness, and we know not whence he comes or whither he goes. Thus is it with the life of man. If the new teacher can tell us anything that will give us hope and knowledge, let him be heard."

Paulinus then told them the story of Jesus and His love. So moved was the assembly, that the king and the pagan high priest were the first to make their submission and receive baptism. St. Paulinus spent thirty-six days teaching and instructing the people ; and it is said that in that period he baptised thirty thousand converts, assisted by his deacon, James. In 633 the mission of the Saint came to an abrupt end when Edwin was slain in battle by Penda, the heathen king of Mercia, and his country overrun. Paulinus returned to Kent with the widowed queen. He was later appointed Bishop of Rochester, where he remained for eleven years until his death in 644.

#### OCTOBER 11

#### *ST. KENNY, Ab.* (6TH CENTURY)

St. Kenny was an Irish Saint who was born about 516. One day he was in his monastery at Ossory, about to sit down to eat. It was made known to him in some miraculous way that his friend St. Columba of Iona was at that moment in peril in a great storm at sea. Hastening from the table, he ran to the church, saying to his household, "It is no time to eat when that servant of God is in peril of his life on the sea." Kneeling before the altar, he prayed



earnestly for the safety of his friend. At the same hour, it afterwards transpired, Columba, tossed in his little boat on the Irish Sea, was comforting his affrighted companions with the assurance that the holy Kenny was interceding for them before God. The monastery of this Saint was located at Aghadoe, which has since been given the name of Kilkenny, or the church, or cell, of Kenny.

OCTOBER 12

*ST. FELIX AND COMPANIONS, MM.*

(A.D. 482)

The story of these Saints is the sad story of Christians persecuted to the death, not by pagans, but by those who also called themselves by the name of Christ. Towards the end of the fifth century the North African Church had for fifty years been groaning under the cruel rule of Arian Vandal kings who, while professing to be Christians, denied that Christ was of the same substance with the Father, declaring Him to be a creature along with ourselves.

About two years before the general persecution of the orthodox Christians broke out, there are said to have been many terrible premonitions of what was shortly to come to pass. One devout soul, engaged in prayer on a certain day, had a vision of the church of St. Faustus at Carthage adorned with tapestries and sacred banners, with the sanctuary alight with countless lamps and tapers as for a great festival ; but as he looked in wondering admiration, suddenly the lights went black, and instead of the fragrance of incense there arose from the sanctuary a horrid stench as of some foul charnel-house.

The first muttering of the storm was a decree from King Huneric that no one should hold a public office who was not an Arian. He then ordered all the orthodox clergy, as well

as those prominent in Church affairs, to be banished with their families to the Libyan desert, the number amounting to over four thousand, including delicate women, the aged, and children of tenderest years.

Among these was Felix, Bishop of Uniziba. Felix was an old man, too feeble to walk, and when the tyrant was implored to allow him to die in peace in Carthage, he replied, "If he cannot walk, let him be tied by the feet to a yoke of oxen and dragged thither."

The holy confessors were collected in foul concentration camps, in two central towns, Sicca and Laræa, and on a Sunday morning in 482 started forth on their journey. But the persecutors were wonder-struck to find no note of sorrow in this vast procession. Goaded on by their jailers, they came forth upon the road, many halt and lame, some carried on beds or supported in their weakness by the younger and stronger of the company – a woeful procession indeed to those who looked on, but the confessors themselves joyful in their hearts as they triumphantly chanted the 149th Psalm, 'Such honour have all His Saints.'

A vast throng of those who had not been included in the decree of banishment followed, and the contrast was a strange one between the martyrs going joyfully to starvation and death, and the sorrow of those who were left behind. Women cast their babies at the feet of the priests as they passed, sobbing, "Who will baptise our little ones? Who will give us absolution? Who will offer for us the Holy Sacrifice? Let us follow you." One old woman, with her little grandson, was noted in the crowd, persistently following the confessors, urging the tired child forward and saying, "Run, little son, run; do you not see these Saints, how eager they are to win the crown."

The road was all too narrow to contain the vast multitudes, which flowed over the adjacent hillsides, carrying lighted tapers in their hands to symbolise their burning faith. Travelling by night rather than by day to avoid the

fierce heat, they reached at length the place of their martyrdom. It was a desolate waste, full of vipers and beasts of prey. It offered little or no food, and less water, but to them it proved the gate of heaven. A few weeks saw all, even the strongest of them, stretched lifeless on the burning sands, for death soon ended their misery and crowned them with a glorious immortality.

OCTOBER 13

*ST. EDWARD THE CONFESSOR*  
(A.D. 1066)

How often nowadays do we find those who permit their business affairs to conflict with their religious duties ! Edward, the last but one of the Saxon kings of England, was one who always sought first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness. In his youth he was an exile in Normandy. The Danish kings had seized the government of England, and Edward was of gentle mould, not the type of prince who could have recovered by force his ancestral realm. He trusted not in his own strength, but in God, and by a peaceful election he was called to the throne of his fathers. In his hour of triumph, he was not forgetful of the Power which had brought him back from exile, and in gratitude he rebuilt on a grander scale the abbey church of St. Peter, generally known as Westminster Abbey. The good king lived just long enough for his beloved edifice to be sufficiently completed to serve as his sepulchre. It was on January 5th, the Eve of the Epiphany, in the year 1066 that the gentle monarch breathed his last. On the morrow, the feast of the Wise Kings, he was laid to rest in his own church, and Harold, his successor, was on that day, in the same place, crowned in his stead. Saxon England was soon to fall under the battle-axes of William's Norman knights ;

but King Edward – Saint Edward as he came to be called – long reigned in the hearts of his devoted people. His body still sleeps at Westminster, and the stone pavement about his shrine is worn into deep hollows by the knees of the pilgrims who through the centuries have paid their devotions in this place made holy by the presence of his hallowed relics.

OCTOBER 14

*ST. CALIXTUS, B.M.*

(A.D. 223)

This Saint was Pope of Rome in the third century. For five years he administered a vigorous pontificate. He was a man merciful to sinners, and did much to moderate the severity of the discipline with which the Church in that age was accustomed to treat them. He had the spirit of prayer, with a lofty ideal of the sacred ministry, and it was he who instituted the Ember Days as we have them now, upon which the faithful are exhorted to pray for those who are to be ordained to any holy office. Like all reformers, he met with much opposition. In 223, in the course of a riotous pagan outbreak against the Christians, he was flung headlong from the window of a high building in the Trastevere quarter of Rome, and dashed to pieces. His body reposes in the church of St. Mary in Trastevere, close to the spot where he met his martyrdom.

OCTOBER 15

*ST. TERESA, V.Ab.*

(A.D. 1582)

It is not often in history that a woman has been chosen as generalissimo of the armies of a great nation. That

honour has been decreed to one woman, and that long after her death. The person so distinguished was in no sense an Amazon while living, but a devout Carmelite nun, Teresa of Spain, whose devout countrymen believed that from her place in Paradise she could by her prayers lead them to nobler victories than those which might be achieved by any armoured knight, warring with weapons of the flesh.

Teresa de Copeda was born at Avila in Castile, on March 28th, 1515. Devoutly reared, from a child she showed great initiative and imagination in spiritual things. Having read the stories of certain martyrs, she and her little brother planned to run away in the hope of finding some Moors who would persecute them, and great was her mortification when the servants followed and brought them ignominiously back from their little excursion after martyrdom. She tells us in her account of her life that she used to stand and, in a kind of childish rapture, repeat again and again the solemn words, "Eternity, eternity, for ever, for ever." If we are to accept the stories she tells us of her girlhood, it was full of vanities and juvenile dissipations. But it does not do to take the Saints' estimates of themselves too seriously. If we knew the exact facts, very likely we should find that her indiscretions were innocuous enough. Her little brother, who, like most small brothers, was a tease, said to her one day as she was engaged in arranging her beautiful hair, "You have no idea how the devils frizzle in hell the hair of girls who are vain," whereupon, much to her mother's indignation, she cut it off.

At eighteen, having failed to gain her father's consent to her becoming a Carmelite, she ran away from home, and entered the convent of the Incarnation at Avila, upon which he interposed no further objection. The house was a relaxed one, and she does not seem to have had any deep fervour in her religion until St. Augustine's *Confessions*, that book which through fifteen hundred years has brought

so many sinners to their knees, fell into her hands. With her conversion began one of the most remarkable religious careers the Church has ever seen. As a monastic reformer, as a master of the spiritual life, as a great mystic, the Christian ages have rarely produced her equal.

Like all those who would live godly in this life, she had much persecution to endure. One can gain some idea of the difficulties that were thrown in her way, when a papal nuncio wrote, 'As for Teresa, she is a restless woman, rambling about the country, indocile and contumacious, the inventor of false doctrines, with the appearance of piety, guilty of having run away from her cloister against the commands of her superiors and the Tridentine decrees, and a despiser of the apostolic precept which forbids a woman to teach.'

Associated with her in her spiritual enterprises were men like St. John of the Cross and St. Peter of Alcantara, and although they were all called to endure suffering, no opposition was able to withstand for long the combined sweetness and strength with which the Saint prosecuted her aims. She saw within her lifetime seventeen strong foundations of her reformed Carmelites in Spain and Portugal.

One might think that a woman capable of such achievements would have been a stern and forbidding personality. Nothing was further from her nature. Sweet, sunny, she brought a sense of peace and ease of heart wherever she went, and her keen sense of humour lighted many a dark place for herself and her disciples. There was wit as well as faith in her reply to an objection once made that she could not undertake to build a certain convent because she had no money – "A penny is nothing," she said, "and Teresa is nothing ; but God and a penny and Teresa can do all things." And there was genuine fun in her remark on seeing a portrait of herself painted by a Carmelite brother – "God forgive you, Brother John, for making me so ugly." Nor can we believe that she did not see some humour in the

account she gives of her experiences with the devils, one of whom – a wizened little imp – unable to distract her from her prayers by any other means, sat down on the collect she was trying to read, so that she could not see it ; nor would he move until she put him to precipitate flight with the sign of the Cross.

There is a delightfully human touch in her remark that there were three temptations she was always pleased to discover in a novice – the temptations to laugh, sleep, and eat. The first showed a happy disposition, which is very necessary in a religious ; the second indicated a quiet conscience ; while the third was a sign of good health.

This valiant woman, a mighty mother in Israel, went to her rest in 1582 in the sixty-seventh year of her age, having spent forty-nine militant years in Holy Religion.

#### OCTOBER 16

*ST. GALL, Ab.*  
(6TH CENTURY)

This Saint was born in Ireland about the year 555. He went to the continent with St. Columbanus, and settled near Lake Constance in Switzerland, founding the monastic settlement which afterwards grew into the great seat of religious learning known as the monastery of St. Gall. Here amid the wild beasts he served God with prayer and fasting, and his sanctity drew the pagan inhabitants of the country to him in great numbers. He was the first Christian teacher and apostle of that part of old Helvetia. Duke Gunzo, who ruled the country, wished to have St. Gall made bishop, but the canny Saint determined to escape so burdensome a dignity, and sacrificed his deacon, John, in his stead. His monastery observed the old Irish Rule for

several centuries, but in the eighth century it became a Benedictine foundation. It has ever maintained its reputation for learning.

OCTOBER 17

*ST. MAMELTA, M.*  
(5th CENTURY)

This day commemorates a Saint who came out of great tribulation, and was no sooner brought into the fellowship of Christ than her crown was awarded her. She was a Persian heathen priestess of the fifth century, who was converted through the instrumentality of a sister who was a Christian. She was baptised by a bishop whose name has not been preserved, and publicly denounced the old worship over which she had presided. So enraged were the pagan votaries of the gods that, while wearing her baptismal robe, and with the anointing of the regenerating sacrament still fragrant on her brow, she was seized and, after cruel torture which had no power to shake her faith, was drowned in a lake. Her name is little known in the Western Church, but the ancient Persian Christians venerated her as one of their own people who had showed them how to suffer to the utmost for the love of Christ.

OCTOBER 18

*ST. JAMES OF YORK, C.*  
(A.D. 640)

When the defeat of King Edwin by the pagan King Penda of Mercia stopped St. Paulinus' crusade amongst the hills of Northumbria, that Saint returned to Kent. Courageous as he had been, his chaplain, a deacon named



James, was a still braver spirit. Although his master had fled, he held fast to his post in the north, and kept the little band of Christians together at York through all the stormy period when the cruel Penda scourged the land. His patron, King Edwin, had fallen at the battle of Hatfield in 633. The crown prince had fallen with him ; Queen Ethelburga had fled back to her old home in Kent ; and the youngest of the royal princes, having surrendered to Penda on a promise of safety which the faithless pagan chief broke immediately, was murdered in an infamous manner. Every corner of Northumbria was ravaged by Penda's horde, and the light of Christ seemed quenched in the north, except where it was kept aflame in beleaguered York by the gallant deacon and his little flock.

But the gates of hell could not prevail against the Church, and St. James lived to see Penda defeated and slain by the Christian armies of Oswald, who brought St. Aidan from Iona to lead the people back to the feet of Christ. Christian Englishmen cannot afford to forget or neglect the memory of this brave deacon who held fast in a time when Christianity seemed a lost cause. After seven years of devoted service, he died in 640.

OCTOBER 19

*ST. FRIDESWIDE, V.Ab.*

(8TH CENTURY)

This Saint was a Mercian abbess, the daughter of a prince who lived at Oxford early in the eighth century. The old story is that Algar, a neighbouring prince, sought her hand in marriage. Fearing lest her father would compel her to accept his addresses, she fled from Oxford with two nuns in a boat, rowed by an angel in the likeness of a young man clothed in white, and took refuge in a wood near Abingdon.

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Many stories similar to this are told of this holy virgin. There is no question, however, that she founded a convent at Oxford and for many years devoted herself to the service of the poor and outcast. Her convent was in later times given to the Augustinian canons, and it was acquired by Cardinal Wolsey for his Cardinal College, which afterwards became Christ Church. The chapel of this college, which was built in the twelfth century, is now the cathedral church of the Oxford diocese. The bones of the Saint were cast out of their tomb in the chapel in the reign of Edward VI, and those of the wife of Peter Martyr, the reformer, enshrined in their stead. Under Queen Mary the bones of the intruding lady were removed, and the relics of St. Frideswide restored. When Elizabeth came to the throne, she ordered the former to be returned to the shrine without disturbing those of the Saint. So now it is said that they both rest in the same shrine, and those who go to venerate the relics of the Saint have opportunity of contemplating the remains of her strange bedfellow.

OCTOBER 20

*ST. BARSABIAS, M.*

(A.D. 342)

We moderns know too little about the Church of Persia, which flourished gloriously for several centuries, and in the persecutions it endured gave heaven a multitude of saintly citizens. Under Sapor in 342, many noble men and women died for the Faith, among them the humble abbot, Barsabias, who had his ten monks with him in his passion. The martyrs went joyfully to the place of execution, looking on the day as the one which ensured them a crown that would endure. Barsabias is said to have presided at the execution as at some happy fête. Leading his brethren by the hand,

he delivered them, one by one, to the swordsman as one might present candidates upon whom some distinguished honour was to be conferred. Having seen them all win their victories, he bared his own neck to the sword, all the while singing the praises of God that the privilege of dying for Christ had been bestowed upon him and his sons in the Faith.

OCTOBER 21

*ST. URSULA, V.M.*

(5TH CENTURY)

The name of this Saint is widely known throughout Christendom, but of her history little has been handed down. She is supposed to have been the daughter of a king of Cornwall, whose hand was sought in marriage by a neighbouring prince. Not wishing to marry, she received permission to travel abroad for three years with a company of virgins. On the Rhine they fell in with the Huns under Attila, who put them to a cruel death. This is one of many variants of the story. Her history, slight and uncertain as it is, has appealed powerfully to the Christian imagination. She is supposed to be the patron of schoolgirls. In art this Saint is represented with an arrow in her hand, and a dove at her side, with her robe protecting her companions.

OCTOBER 22

*ST. DONATUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 874)

Everyone who has visited Florence knows the charming little town of Fiesole which crowns the hill to the north-east, three miles away, looking down as it has done for more than

two thousand years upon the broad valley of the Arno. It was a town hoary with age when the rich city upon which it looks was a huddle of fishermen's huts along the river bank, and the precincts of its quaint little cathedral have given some worthy history to the Church.

In the ninth century an Irish pilgrim who was afterwards given the Latin name Donatus, meaning a gift, was returning from Rome where he had made his devotions at the tomb of the Apostles. By the providence of God he arrived at Fiesole just after the bishop had died, while the clergy and people were gathered in the cathedral to choose his successor. Simple soul that he was, he went into the church, eager to see the dignitaries of the diocese in solemn conclave. But hardly had he stepped across the threshold when, untouched by human hands, all the bells in the tower rang out a joyous peal, and the lamps and tapers at the altar sprang into light as though set aflame for some high feast. The throng, startled and awed at this strange manifestation, looked about and saw the humble little Irish pilgrim – he was short of stature – entering. Heaven had sent them their bishop. He was Donatus, a gift from God. There could be no doubt of it, else why these strange doings, this happy ringing of bells and sudden glowing of many lights? The cry was taken up, "Donatus is bishop," and the poor little man, terrified at this amazing demonstration, was compelled to submit to consecration.

Never again did he see the green island of his heart's love. But he had learned to serve God when and where the call came, and so faithfully did he serve Him and his flock in the little hill diocese that his name has never been forgotten amongst these pious Tuscan folk.

OCTOBER 23

*ST. ODA, W.*

(A.D. 723)

St. Oda is said to have been a daughter of that Childebert, son of Theoderic, King of Burgundy, who, when Clothair II ordered the murder of all the Burgundian offspring, mounted his horse, galloped away, and has never been heard of since. Oda's early life was overshadowed by the menace which threatened her whole family. She married Bozo, Duke of Aquitaine, a nephew of the bloody Clothair. Bozo died in 688, and his holy widow, impressed through her family misfortunes with the futility of earthly things, devoted her fortune and a long life to the service of the poor and outcast.

She built a hospital near her house, and ministered daily to the sick with her own hands. One day, says her legend, there came to the hospital a youth, spent and ill, asking to be admitted. She received him, washed his travel-stained feet, prepared for him a bed, and then hastened to get him food. She found the storeroom overflowing with plenty, and wondered at the source of this mysterious bounty, but when she placed the bread in the youth's hand, lo, the hand was pierced, and the face that smiled at her was the face of Christ.

"This day thou hast fed Me in person," He said; "on other days thou shalt feed Me in My poor and suffering ones. And I invite thee to the banquet I have prepared in My Kingdom, where I shall gird Myself, and thou shalt sit at My table, and these hands shall serve thee." And He vanished from her sight.

Many years after, when the Saint lay a-dying, heaven was opened to her eyes, and she saw the Lord standing, beckoning to her with His hand and saying, "Come, for

all things are ready." She responded to the divine invitation in the year of grace 723.

OCTOBER 24

*ST. FELIX OF TUBZACENE, B.M.*

(A.D. 303)

When the Emperor Diocletian decreed that throughout the whole Roman Empire the Christians, both laymen and clerics, should renounce Christ or die, one of the methods by which the renunciation might be made was by surrendering the sacred Scriptures to be burned by the authorities.

St. Felix was Bishop of Tubzacene in north Africa, and on being questioned, he boldly declared that he possessed the Books and that he would not give them up. As was so often the case in the persecutions, the local magistrate earnestly desired to spare his Christian neighbour. He was grieved and embarrassed that the savage imperial decrees required him to proceed against one for whom he had every regard, with whom he had perhaps for years been thrown happily in social and civic life. But in this instance, as in innumerable others, the accused gave the perplexed magistrate no help. On the contrary, while the magistrate anxiously sought, by every legitimate means, to acquit him, the martyr sought by every legitimate means, and with equal zeal, to seize the crown which he saw in sight. It might never come his way again. He had been taught that the palm of martyrdom was the highest honour that could be bestowed in the Kingdom of God. Why should he forfeit it by accepting the mercy of a petty earthly court which dared to sit in judgment on the truth of God and His Church? Therefore, let the magistrate temporise as he might, Felix insisted that he had the Books, that he held the emperor's decrees in defiance, and, washing his hands

of any responsibility for what happened, invited the court to do its worst. Reluctantly the judge gave the sentence of death, to which the martyr replied in a loud voice, "I give Thee thanks, Lord Jesus, that Thou hast deigned to set me free."

The ancient Acts of the martyr tell us that as he was led to the place of his passion, the very moon shone as red as blood. Felix, raising his eyes to heaven, cried, "I give Thee thanks, O Lord. Six and fifty years have I served Thee. I have kept my virginity ; I have kept the sacred Gospels safe ; I have preached the Faith and truth. I bow my neck for Thee, O Thou Eternal in the heavens."

One stroke of the sword gave him the crown he had so long desired.

OCTOBER 25

*ST. BONIFACE, B.C.*

(A.D. 422)

This Saint was the first Bishop of Rome to bear this illustrious name. He was inducted into his office in a time of strife and turmoil. The succession in the bishopric was disputed. Eulalius, the Archdeacon of Rome, was set up as Pope by a faction which seized the Lateran basilica, and proceeded with much violence to perform the functions of the Pope, and Boniface was driven from the city. He was a man of a gentle, uncontending spirit, but full of a courage which made him a tower of strength in such troublous times. After many sufferings the right triumphed, and he was restored to his privileges and honours. He was engaged in the anti-Pelagian campaign, and co-operated powerfully with St. Augustine of Hippo in contending against this heresy which came near to making man the author of his own salvation. St. Augustine dedicated one of his anti-Pelagian treatises to St. Boniface. The Saint died in 422,

leaving an example to after ages of how a man, without aggression or a spirit of domination, could through steadfast devotion to principle, and the exercise of the courage which is born of trust in God, do a great and lasting work for the Church.

OCTOBER 26

*SS. LUCIAN AND MARCIAN, MM.*

(A.D. 251)

The uneventful lives of these two Saints illustrate how a simple soul may bring earthly, or even satanic, wisdom to naught. They lived in Nicomedia, where they practised with great skill the arts of heathen magic and had much power with the people. Having occasion to try their diabolic art against a certain Christian maiden, to their perplexity and rage they found it utterly unavailing. On investigating the causes of their humiliating failure, they discovered that this simple maiden had a shield and buckler in the continual use of the Holy Name Jesus, and in the sign of His Sacred Cross, against which they could wield no power. Struck with consternation at the futility of their magic when it was opposed to Christ, they enquired what this mysterious strength was which a weak child could so effectually employ ; and hearing of Him, they abandoned their false gods and joyfully received baptism. It was not long before they were brought to the test in the fiery trial of persecution, and in the power of His Name and Cross they went victorious through death to the rewards promised to him that overcometh. They suffered by fire in Nicomedia in Bithynia in the year 251.



OCTOBER 27

*ST. FRUMENTIUS, B.C.*

(4TH CENTURY)

The only free soil on the continent of Africa to-day is Liberia and Abyssinia. St. Frumentius was the apostle of the latter country. As a Christian youth of Tyre he went on a voyage with an uncle, and was shipwrecked on the coasts of Abyssinia. The entire crew was massacred by the barbarous people, except this youth, whose attractive appearance caused him to be spared, and he was sent to the king, who took a great fancy to him and made him the royal treasurer. The heart of Frumentius was stirred within him as he saw the idolatrous lives of the people. His influence was great, for he was now the tutor to the royal princes. He accordingly applied to St. Athanasius for episcopal consecration, and his pupil Rizan, who had succeeded to the throne, was one of his first converts. The submission of the people to the yoke of Christ quickly followed. From that time this remote and warlike kingdom has maintained itself as a Christian nation, unaffected by paganism and Islamism on every side.

OCTOBER 28

*ST. NEOT, C.*

(A.D. 880)

The old tradition that Alfred the Great was the founder of the university of Oxford has been shown by research to be without foundation, but none the less was this monarch a great patron of letters, and he did much towards the advancement of education and the intellectual life of England generally. The contributions which the king made to

the development of the nation are said to be due in many instances to the influence of this Saint, who was the king's most trusted counsellor. Neot was a monk of Glastonbury, and one of the great scholars of his age. He took no part in the life of the Court, his one ambition being to serve God in humility and obscurity, and almost his whole life was spent in his hermitage in Cornwall, where by his prayers and fasting he did more to help his beloved country than he could have done by mingling in its worldly affairs as a Court bishop. He went to his reward about the year 880. His body was removed to St. Neots in Huntingdonshire in the reign of King Edgar.

OCTOBER 29

*ST. ELFLEDA, Ab.*  
(A.D. 1030)

St. Elfleda was the Abbess of Romsey in the New Forest, and was the most famous of the Saints whose names are associated with that ancient monastic foundation. So tender was her heart towards the poor that her contemporaries feared that she would impoverish the abbey by her charities, but rather did it prosper under the terms of her generosity, and it was found that our Lord was not slack concerning His promise that those who give up houses and lands for His Name's sake should receive in this world an hundredfold. The more Elfleda gave, the more did her foundation increase, and she proved to the malcontents that it pays to be amongst those who in giving to the poor 'lend to the Lord,' who never fails to repay with generous interest.

The devotion of the poor whom her hands relieved invented many beautiful stories in evidence of her sanctity. On one occasion, they said, as she held a candle by which

to read the Scripture lesson at Mattins, the wind blew it out. She then held up her hand, which had so often ministered to Christ in His poor, and, lo, the light streamed from it upon the sacred page, brighter than a score of tapers. She died in 1030, and was buried in her abbey church. The present church, which was built later, is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin and St. Elfleda.

OCTOBER 30

*ST. GERMANUS OF CAPUA, B.C.*

(A.D. 540)

The many souls in our own day who are mourning over the divisions of Christendom, and who daily pray for the peace of Jerusalem, might do well to invoke the intercession of this Saint, whose devoted efforts, fourteen hundred years ago, healed a division between East and West which threatened at one time to be as fatal as the Great Schism which rends the seamless robe of Christ in our day. He was sent to Constantinople in 519 by Pope Hormisdas to negotiate a plan for unity. This schism was caused by certain heresies which had arisen in the East, and had been encouraged by the Emperors. The price of unity was, of course, the extirpation of the heresy, and so lovingly and tactfully did Germanus fulfil his mission that the heresy was driven out, and the divided portions of Christ's inheritance were united in one Faith and one Communion.

But before he accomplished his work, Germanus was made so to suffer at the hands of the heretics that the Church has always numbered him among her confessors of the Faith. He died in 540, and St. Gregory the Great narrates that St. Benedict, praying in his cell at Monte Cassino, saw in a vision the soul of the brave confessor carried into heaven by the angels.

OCTOBER 31

*ST. QUINTIN, M.*

(A.D. 286)

The ancient town of St. Quentin in northern France gained wide notoriety in the World War because of the fierce battles which were fought in its vicinity, but few of those who fought over its fields knew the history of the place, or how it gained its name. In this little town, which in ancient times was called by the sonorous Latin name of Augusta Vermanduorum, the martyr Gaius Quintinus sacrificed his life for the Faith in 286. He was a Roman citizen, and the son of a senator. As in so many other instances, the prefect sought to save the martyr from what he regarded as his fanaticism.

"How is it," he asked, "that one sprung from so noble a family should adopt such superstition as to adore a man who was crucified by Jews?"

"The highest nobility consists in knowing God and obeying His commandments," replied the martyr. "Do what thou wilt to my body, I commit my soul to Christ."

The verdict was inevitable. As a Roman citizen he died by the sword, but not until he had been subjected to horrible tortures in the vain hope of shaking his holy resolution. His body was thrown into the River Somme, but was recovered by a holy woman named Eusebia, and a church was afterwards built over its resting-place. The ancient town was a place of great importance, being at the junction of five principal military roads, and was named for the Roman empress, but the imperial fame of the proud Augusta has long since been swallowed in the greater glory of the martyr who reigns with Christ.

NOVEMBER 1

*ALL SAINTS*

As early as the fourth century, the octave day of Whitsunday, which is now kept in honour of the Holy Trinity, was observed as a memorial of all the martyrs throughout the world. The day was appropriate, as it followed so hard upon the feast of the Holy Ghost who sanctifies all the people of God.

In 731, Pope Gregory III dedicated a chapel in honour of all the Saints, in the basilica of St. Peter in Rome, and ordered their commemoration to be made on the first day of November. The festival was slow in taking hold, however, and it was not until the ninth century that it became in any real sense universal in the West.

The Church has always followed faithfully the New Testament teaching that the spirits of just men, made perfect, are in heaven with God. There they enjoy perfect felicity ; they offer their prayers for their brethren who are still on earth ; and we may and should ask their intercessions ; for if we ask the intercession of sinners who are still on earth, we may surely ask the prayers of Saints who are in heaven.

Whether the members of Christ are on earth, in Purgatory, or in heaven, they are, of necessity, members one of another because they are all members of Christ. Like the members of a body, no one of them can suffer without all the others suffering with it. If my hand is diseased, my whole body suffers. When the diseased hand is healed, the whole body enjoys the benefit of the healing. So, if we sin, every member, in some way we cannot trace, feels the effects of this lowering of the spiritual vitality of the sinning member. When we repent and are restored, every member of the Body of Christ is benefited by the new infusion of

divine life into that one member. Likewise is it with good works. Every devout prayer, every good work, brings grace to the particular member, but there is no one in the wide Kingdom of God who is not helped by it. St. Gregory the Great says that every offering of the Eucharist on earth in this way enhances the joy of the Saints in Paradise, as it gives help also to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Thus no man liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. Whether it be spiritual life or spiritual death, many a one besides ourselves is involved.

NOVEMBER 2

*ST. WILLEBOLD OF BERKHEIM, C.*

(A.D. 1230)

On All Souls' evening, in the year 1230, a youthful pilgrim, scarcely out of his teens, dressed in a ragged habit, came into the village of Berkheim in Austria. No one offering him hospitality, he crept, with a death-sickness upon him, into the hayloft of an inn. Suddenly at midnight the church bells of the village began to peal joyfully. The people ran from their cottages to see what was the matter. There was no light in the belfry, and the bells were being rung by unseen hands. Then a strange light was seen to glow from the hayloft of the inn. Hastening thither they found the pilgrim lying dead, his wasted body surrounded by a mysterious glow of light, while the air was full of strains of rare music. No other testimony was needed to convince these simple folk that a Saint had died in their midst ; for though men recognised him not, heaven would not let him be without witness.

Investigation showed that the young stranger was Albert von Calw, the son of a noble and devoted house which had given two popes to the Church. He had left his family

castle the previous year to go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and, sick and weary, he had come into this village to die, neglected and alone. The announcement of his identity made a profound impression through that region, and for seven hundred years he has been the object of ever-increasing veneration. To this day crowds of pilgrims visit his shrine.

NOVEMBER 3

*ST. WINEFRID, V.M.*

(7TH CENTURY)

Very little is known of St. Winefrid, but her character and holiness must have been very marked, for her life, uneventful as it was, has made a profound impression on the English Church and nation for nine hundred years. She seems to have been the daughter of a Welsh chieftain, and as a child showed such a predilection for the Religious Life that her parents put her under the fostering care of her uncle, St. Beuno, who had built a church at or near the place called Holywell in Flintshire. This was the famous St. Winefrid's Well, of which Montalembert says that, in his day (he wrote in 1860), 'the abundant fountain is still frequented and even venerated by a population divided into twenty different sects but animated by one common hatred for Catholic truth. Its source is covered by a fine Gothic porch of three aisles, under which it forms a vast basin, where from morning to evening the sick and infirm of a region ravaged by heresy come to bathe with a strange confidence in the miraculous virtues of these icy waters.'

The legend-mongers of later times invented numerous quaint stories about the Saint. One was that she repulsed the advances of a certain Prince Caradoc, and in his rage he cut off her head with one stroke of his sword. Her uncle

replaced it on her shoulders, and the wound healed without causing further inconvenience. The only scar that remained was a thin thread of red that encircled her throat ever afterwards. Pious old Alban Butler, in his *Lives of the Saints*, says, 'If the writers who lived a long time after these transactions were, by some of their guides, led into any mistake in any of these circumstances, neither the sanctity of the martyr nor the devotion of the place can be hereby made liable to censure.' This principle should be kept in mind in studying the history of the Saints. It is hardly fair to visit them with the penalty of ecclesiastical ostracism because some foolish chronicler took liberties with their names.

NOVEMBER 4

ST. CHARLES BORROMEIO, B.C.  
(A.D. 1584)

St. Charles had the misfortune of being a nephew of Pope Pius IV, and therefore found himself at a very early age in dangerously high position in the Church. He was made Archbishop of Milan when he was twenty-three years old. But these preferments humbled the saintly youth instead of filling him with pride. He astonished everyone by showing that he meant to exercise his holy office not for the profit of himself and his friends, but for the glory of God and the good of His Church. Living in an evil age, this brought upon him the enmity of many persons, and his life was attempted more than once. The lot of a reforming bishop in that day, like that of Gilbert's policeman, was not a happy one. But at any rate, the Milanese, whatever their faults, were an honest and straightforward folk, and they were quite open and direct in the method of their opposition. It was a comfort at least to know just where one's opponents



stood. He was shot on one occasion while celebrating Mass at the cathedral altar, but in those days weapons were crude and gun-fire not very accurate, and so, fortunately, he escaped serious injury.

During the plague epidemic he endeared himself to all classes by his heroic devotion to the sick, imperilling his life without hesitation. To keep the plague from spreading, the city government forbade all assemblies of the people. St. Charles, however, did not believe in the germ theory, and insisted on having processions through the streets to pray for deliverance. His intention was pious, but his action was mistaken, and it made him unpopular with the health authorities of the day.

St. Charles was a great reformer, and if all the Catholics had been like him there would never have been any Protestant Reformation. It was his example more than anything else which broke the force of that Reformation in Italy and Switzerland, and kept thousands within the fold of the Church who otherwise might have become Calvinists and Lutherans. St. Charles died in 1584 at the age of forty-six.

#### NOVEMBER 5

*ST. CLARUS, M.*

(A.D. 894)

St. Clarus was one of those consecrated Englishmen whose zeal for souls drove him to get him out of his country and from his kindred to preach the Gospel to the pagans of northern France in the ninth century. He was said to have been of noble extraction and was a native of Rochester. After many years of what one biographer calls 'an angelical life,' he died a martyr to chastity. He having reproved the advances of a wicked lady of quality in the country,

she employed, in her rage against him, two assassins who, overtaking him in a lonely spot, murdered him. The place where he suffered his martyrdom is on the River Epte, not far distant from Rouen. For centuries he was honoured with singular veneration in the country about Rouen, Beauvais and Paris, and in the days when France was 'the Eldest Daughter of the Church,' his shrine was resorted to by vast numbers of pilgrims. He suffered for righteousness' sake about the year 894.

NOVEMBER 6

*ST. LEONARD, C.*

(A.D. 559)

St. Leonard was godson to Clovis, King of the Franks, and resigned earthly advancement to become a monk. He built himself an oratory in the forest of Pauvain, not far from Limoges, where he lived a life of penance and prayer. But he was no mere hermit. His heart was a burning fiery furnace of love for souls, and from time to time he would issue from his retreat, and go through the country preaching with such earnestness and eloquence that multitudes were brought to conversion.

The Frankish king used to hunt in the Pouvain forest, and not infrequently his queen accompanied him. On one of these excursions the queen, being seized with the pains of childbirth, was in peril of her life. The king was in great alarm, but Leonard prayed very earnestly for her, and she was speedily delivered of a fine boy. The king, in his gratitude, gave the Saint as much of the forest as he could ride around in a night, for a monastic foundation.

St. Leonard is regarded as the patron of prisoners, the story being that the king granted him the privilege of freeing every prisoner whom he visited. Whatever this story may

be worth, a greater thing is, without doubt, true : that his prayer and priestly ministration broke the chains which fettered many a soul who had been led captive by sin. In art he is represented as holding a broken manacle. He died, full of years and holiness, in 559.

NOVEMBER 7

*ST. WILLIBRORD, B.C.*

(A.D. 739)

This Saint was an Englishman, born in Northumberland in 658. He was a monk of the monastery of Ripon. When he was thirty-one years old, he went to the region now known as Holland and Belgium, and evangelised the pagan German tribes which dwelt there. The labours he wrought amongst these benighted people were stupendous, but he had his reward, for it was his privilege to see thousands of them brought into the fold of Christ as the result of his loving self-sacrifice on their behalf. He went about the country casting down idols, and preaching to the people the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. They were a fierce folk, cruel and barbarous, and more than one of the Saint's companions suffered martyrdom at their hands. He became the first Archbishop of Utrecht, and his name has been venerated in the Church's history as the apostle of the Frisians.

St. Willibrord, like some pious folk of our own time, was not always tactful. Witikin, a great heathen chief, thought he would like to become a Christian. He was instructed, and was on the point of being baptised, when he asked where his forefathers were. "They are in hell," was the Saint's abrupt reply. "Very well," said the chief, "what is good enough for them is good enough for me," and he would hear no more about adopting Christianity.

Not only was the Saint wanting in discretion, but he was a little weak in his theology. The Church has never taught that those who have not had the opportunity of hearing the message of Christ's love will, on that account, be damned. If they live up to the light of their conscience, God will have them in some way, we know not how, in his loving care. But even the Saints do not reach perfection in this world, and St. Willibrord commands our veneration, despite his foibles.

NOVEMBER 8

*ST. IDA OF TOGGENBERG*

(A.D. 1226)

This Saint was a Swabian princess who married Henry, Count of Toggenberg, a man of fierce and jealous passions. Unjustly suspecting his wife of infidelity, in an insane rage he slew the man whom he imagined was his rival, and threw his wife headlong down the cliff upon the brow of which his castle was built. The trees of the forest below broke her fall, and, while bruised and stunned, she was not seriously hurt.

Reviving, she fled into the mountains and sought refuge in a cavern. Her marriage had not been blessed with offspring, and she determined to remain a recluse in the wilds. There was a strange charm and peace in the life; no fierce words to fill her with continual alarm, no angry jealousies to be met, no wrongs to be borne, testing her endurance to the breaking point. The forest yielded water and food and shelter, and her time could be given to that which she loved best, prayer and meditation. For seventeen years she kept prayer and vigil in her cave, mourned as dead by her family, and especially by her husband, who came to himself, and whose penitence was real and lasting.

One day a huntsman from the castle, in pursuit of game,

discovered her abode, and recognising the countess, fell at her feet in profound agitation. She raised him up, and asked after her husband. Learning of his deep penitence, she directed the huntsman to go to him and tell him that she was alive. Henry hastened to the cavern, and, with tears of mingled joy and grief, heard the true story of her innocence.

Her husband built for her a little cell near the church of St. Mary in the meadow below the castle gates, but she was driven from it by the throngs of devout folk who came to her as to a Saint. She took refuge in the near-by convent of Fisching, and there she died in the odour of sanctity in 1226.

NOVEMBER 9

*ST. BENIGNUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 468)

When St. Patrick was journeying through the south of Ireland, he one day lay down on a grassy bank in a meadow to rest. As he slept, a little boy, the son of a nobleman whose castle was hard by, was wandering through the fields and came upon the Saint. Fascinated with the sweetness of the old man's countenance, he gathered armfuls of flowers and gently strewed them over the Saint as he slept. St. Patrick awoke, and his heart was won by the beauty and innocence of the child. Benignus – the kindly one – the Saint called him, and he induced the father to let him, as was the custom of the time and country, take the boy to educate him. Benignus henceforth was St. Patrick's constant companion, and on the death of the great apostle of Ireland, the young man succeeded him in his office as Bishop of Armagh. Benignus died in 468, and his name has ever been one of those which the devout Irish people love to honour.

NOVEMBER 10

ST ANDREW AVELLINO C.

(A.D. 1608)

This St. Andrew was a young Neapolitan lawyer, handsome, engaging, and devout withal, but like so many of those whom the world courts, easily carried away by its false blandishments. One day he pleaded a case in court, and despite the pricks of conscience, he followed the custom of the Bar, and secured the acquittal of his client by deliberately asserting what he knew to be untrue. Returning home, he opened his Bible and his eyes fell upon the words of the first chapter of the book of Wisdom – ‘There is no word so secret that shall go for naught, and the mouth that telleth lies slayeth the soul.’

Stunned at what seemed a rebuke direct from heaven, he gave up his profession, and devoted himself to prayer and to the nurture of the souls of others. In 1556 he embraced the Rule of the Order of the Theatines, and his holiness increased with his years. He made two private vows : first to fight ever against the risings of his own will ; and, second, to strive by every means offered to advance in Christian perfection.

Living according to these principles, he became, as was inevitable, a sure guide to whom many turned in their spiritual perplexities. Among his disciples were many holy men, the most distinguished being Laurence Scupoli, the saintly author of that great ascetical masterpiece, *The Spiritual Combat*. Few of the writings of St. Andrew are left to us, but those who would know his doctrine will find it in Scupoli’s matchless work. St. Francis de Sales carried this little book in his pocket for fifteen years, and himself tells us that there was scarcely a day during that time when he did not read at least a few paragraphs of it.

St. Andrew lived to the ripe age of eighty-eight. On November 10th, 1608, as he was about to proceed to the altar to celebrate the Mass, he was stricken. Thrice he repeated the words "*Introibo ad altare Dei* (I will go unto the altar of God)," but he could get no further. Receiving the viaticum with great joy, he expired in the arms of his weeping brethren.

## NOVEMBER 11

*ST. MARTIN, B.C.*

(A.D. 401)

This Saint was born in Hungary, of pagan parents, in 316. He entered the imperial cavalry, and served for several years in the Roman armies. He was converted in his youth, and many are the stories told of his holiness and charity.

One morning, as he was passing through the gate of Amiens, a beggar asked him for an alms. Having nothing, and the day being very cold, he drew his sword, cut his military cloak in half and gave part of it to the poor man. That night he had a vision of our Lord in glory telling the Saints around His throne how that Martin had given Him his cloak.

One day, while he was praying, a splendid figure appeared to him, clad, to all appearances, in heavenly glory, and announced itself as our Lord, who wished to reward His servant by letting him adore Him face to face. Martin looked long at the figure, and then said, "If you are my Lord, where are the marks in your hands and feet?" The evil, deceiving spirit – for such it was – vanished in a clap of thunder. Proud Satan could simulate the glory of heaven, but he could not bring himself to bear the marks of our Lord's humiliation.

About the year 371, the city of Tours being deprived of its bishop by the death of Lidorius, the people were resolved to elect St. Martin, whose holiness of life was well known. Fearing lest he should, through modesty, refuse the office, they resorted to what they regarded as a clever and quite justifiable stratagem, one that indeed proved wholly effective. Ruricius, a citizen of Tours, went to him, imploring him to come to see his wife, who he averred was ill. Unsuspecting, Martin went with him, and at a solitary place in the road he was set upon by a band of men who carried him off with the determination of forcing him to be their bishop.

The bishops of the neighbourhood who had assembled to consecrate a bishop for Tours – sleek, well-fed prelates they were – objected on the ground that Martin was not a man of sufficient dignity. One of the foremost objectors was a bishop named Defensor. He had just made his protest when the time arrived for the Church's service. The lesson from the Psalms was read, and the first words were, 'Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength, that Thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.' This word 'avenger' in Latin happened to be *defensor*. The people gave a mighty shout and poor Defensor was covered with confusion.

Martin was consecrated, and in all the centuries of the Church's life few men have proved more devoted shepherds of the flock than this poor man who came near being rejected because he did not wear as fine clothes as the bishops who had opposed him. The accounts of his holiness and charity would fill a volume. After thirty years of consecrated service, he gave his soul to God in death in 401.



NOVEMBER 12

*ST. MENNAS, M.*

(A.D. 303)

St. Mennas was an Egyptian by birth, and a soldier in the Roman legions. On Diocletian's decree against the Church, he retired from his profession of arms into a quiet retreat in Phrygia, and lived a life of prayer with certain other Christians. There he remained until the general persecution of 303, when, filled with enthusiasm for the Faith and a burning desire for martyrdom, he went into the city of Catyæus, and entering the theatre where the mob was witnessing the torturing of some martyrs, he interrupted the sport, crying with a loud voice, "I am found of them that sought me not."

Pyrrhus, the governor, commanded that this brawler at the games be brought before him. Declaring himself a Christian, he was scourged until he stood in a pool of his own blood. On being asked to sacrifice to the gods, he replied, "Leave me, miserable tempter; I have always sacrificed to the one true God, and Him only will I serve. These torments are not insupportable; yea, rather do I rejoice in them." He was condemned to the stake, and met his end with every demonstration of joy at being counted worthy to lay down his life for Christ.

NOVEMBER 13

*ST. BRITIUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 448)

St. Britius, or St. Brice as he is often called, was brought up from childhood in the monastery of St. Martin at Tours.

His early life, in spite of the holy place where he lived, was far from exemplary. St. Martin had frequent occasion to rebuke him, which Britius did not take humbly by any means. He laughed the Saint to scorn, and said, "I am a better Christian than you are, for I was brought up in a monastery, and you were bred a soldier amidst the license of the camp." But a little later Britius repented, and on asking his master's pardon, St. Martin said, "You will one day be Bishop of Tours, but you will not have peace."

And so it came to pass. Chastened and humbled, so saintly a fame did he gain that when St. Martin died in 401, Britius was chosen as his successor. The prophecy of the master was verified. For a period of forty-seven years he was Bishop of Tours, but most of it was spent in exile, and he had ample opportunity to learn the bitterness of calumny. His last years were spent in governing his diocese with extraordinary energy and devotion; and, his youthful failings forgotten, his memory has ever been held in veneration and love.

NOVEMBER 14

*ST. LAURENCE O'TOOLE, B.C.*

(A.D. 1180)

Lorcan O' Tauthal, or, to use the modernised form of his name, Laurence O'Toole, was the first great bishop-patriot of what might be called modern Ireland. He was Archbishop of Dublin when the cruelties of Dermot, King of Leinster, led to that ruler being driven from the country. He sought refuge with Henry II of England. At the beginning of Henry's reign, Pope Adrian IV, who was the only Englishman who ever occupied the papal throne (his name was Nicholas Breakspear), had issued a bull granting to him

the right to conquer Ireland. Henry saw his opportunity now in supporting the deposed Dermot.

Ireland was invaded and conquered with all the savagery that characterised such a war in that brutal age. St. Laurence dwelt in the camp of the patriots, and, while not bearing arms, nobly animated the troops by his courage and example. For several years the war went on with frightful atrocities until, in 1171, King Henry took a hand in person and completed the conquest, making a desolation and calling it peace.

The war being at an end, St. Laurence was not one to lie down in despair because of the ills that had befallen his country. Now more than ever did his people need him, for gaunt famine and horrid pestilence stalked in the wake of war. He devoted himself to relieving them in soul and body with such fervour, consecration and self-forgetfulness that his name has ever since been venerated by every Irishman who loves his country.

Roderic O'Connor was the brave and capable leader of the patriots in the war of defence, and on the defeat of his armies, he had come to terms with King Henry. A new quarrel broke out between them in 1180, and St. Laurence went to England as an emissary of peace. Henry refused to see him, and was in so savage a mood that the Saint retired into Normandy to wait until the king's wrath cooled. He was seized with a fever at Eu, and died after a brief illness. In his last hours his heart was with his poor, down-trodden countrymen. He died, crying in Irish, "O foolish people, and senseless! What now will you do? Who will cure your misfortunes? Who will heal you?"

NOVEMBER 15

*ST. MALO, C.*  
(A.D. 627)

There is a dispute amongst historians as to the birthplace of this Saint. Some say he was born in Brittany, while others make him a native of Wales. The weight of authority would seem to be in favour of his Welsh origin. He was born in the fifth century, and was a disciple of St. Brenden.

Many marvellous stories are told of him, most of which are to be taken with a considerable amount of salt ; but the fact that such marvels are related shows that he was a Saint of such holiness of life that his simple-hearted contemporaries thought nothing to be beyond the range of his spiritual powers. On one occasion when he was a boy in the monastery school, he laid down on a pile of kelp on the beach to sleep. The tide rose and cut him off from the mainland and all thought that this was the last of the youthful Saint. But the waters bore up the kelp while the boy slept on in safety until the tide receded. He was a specialist in miracles which ensured the safety of those who were under persecution. A neighbouring chief, offended with a poor neighbour, tied him to a rock on the seashore, that he might be drowned by the incoming tide. But St. Malo was not idle, and when the waters rose and covered the wretched victim, a chimney was left through the water, between his mouth and the upper air, through which he was able to breathe until the tide fell. St. Malo died about the year 627.

NOVEMBER 16

*ST. PAUL OF THE CROSS, C,*  
(A.D. 1775)

It is customary to speak of the 'dreary eighteenth century.' Owing to the deadness and artificiality of the times, the era fully deserved to be so designated. Yet even in so bleak an age, the grace of God could, and did, produce Saints. One of these chosen souls who, in this inauspicious time, rose to sanctity was Paul Daney, now known as St. Paul of the Cross. From his earliest youth his heart was given to God. The Passion of our Blessed Lord was the principal subject of his meditations. A desire to share in that Passion caused Paul to choose a life of mortification. Others, attracted by his sanctity, joined him in his retreat, and so came into existence the austere Congregation of the Discalced Clerks of the Most Holy Cross and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, commonly known as the Passionists.

Strange to us are the workings of God's Spirit. Italian though he was, Paul felt himself strongly impelled to pray for England, the cold, rationalistic, Protestant England of his day. "O England! England!" he would exclaim. "Let us pray for England. I could not help doing it, even if I wished, for as soon as I begin to pray, that unhappy kingdom comes before me. I remember her every morning in the Holy Mass, and have done so for forty years. What may be God's intention for that kingdom, I know not. Well, let us pray on, and leave the issue in God's hands."

Surely God heard the prayers of His Saint. Not sixty years elapsed after the death of Paul in 1775, before the commencement of the Oxford Movement, when England's Church began to waken from her long sleep.

While the awakening was of a kind different from what the Saint had in mind, it happened, as it so often does,

that God answered His servant according to His own infinite wisdom, and did not permit Himself to be hedged in by the limitations of the vision even of a Saint. But none the less are Anglicans to be grateful for the prayers of St. Paul of the Cross, and we can be sure that he who prayed so earnestly on earth still prays for us from his place in heaven.

NOVEMBER 17

*ST. HUGH OF LINCOLN, B.C.*

(A.D. 1200)

St. Hugh was the son of a Burgundian knight of high degree, the Lord of Avalon, near Grenoble. How Hugh ever grew up to be the lively, happy spirit that he was is a wonder of history and a marvel of grace. He was committed by his father, when eight years old, to the care of a good monk who loved the boy and devoted himself to him. But he was one of those melancholy spirits who thought that laughter and sport belonged to the devil, and that if a small boy was to be brought up to be a Saint, the first requisite was to know how to compose a solemn countenance. "No fun for you, my dear boy; I am going to bring you up for Christ," the old man was wont to say to him.

How Hugh escaped going to the devil promptly, no one has ever known. He bowed to the discipline obediently, but nothing could quench the joyous temper with which God had endowed him.

When nineteen years old, he visited the Grande Chartreuse, and the great monastery, girt about with the pine-clad slopes of the Alps which towered up to heights glittering with eternal snows, filled him with an awe which deepened as he saw the holy lives that were lived within

its walls. Nothing would satisfy the yearning heart of the young Saint but to become a Carthusian.

Ten happy years he spent in this haunt of peace, when Henry II of England asked for a good Religious to be prior of the Carthusian house he had founded in Somerset, and Hugh was detailed for the work. His strong, sweet rule at Witham was well known through England, and when in 1184 the see of Lincoln fell vacant, he was elected to fill it. The Bishop of Lincoln in those days was a great man in the land, and St. Hugh used every ounce-weight of his authority to see that his beloved peasantry were not imposed upon. The chief of the royal foresters was excommunicated (which in that day brought very dreadful consequences) for oppressing a poor labourer, and not even the intercession of the king had any effect until full amends were made.

St. Hugh was not the kind of man to stand before kings and be ashamed. Richard the Lion-hearted levied a tax for the prosecution of a war in France, and St. Hugh forbade his people to pay it. Bishops had been slain in England for the like of this, and Richard was in a flaming anger. Hugh went to visit him, but the king refused to speak to him. "Give me the kiss of peace," said the Saint. "I will not. You do not deserve it," thundered Richard. "I do," said the bishop; "you owe it to me," and he took the king by the cloak and drew him to him with such courage, mingled with so sweet and merry a grace that the lion-heart quite melted, and he could not resist him. He gave him the kiss of peace.

"Now, how stands your conscience," pursued Hugh. "You are one of my parishioners, you know, and I have to account for it to God." "My conscience is fairly easy," answered Richard, "but I admit that it is ruffled with anger against those who interfere with my taxes." "Ah, is that all?" retorted Hugh. "And yet I hear daily complaints of the oppression of the poor, the innocent

afflicted, and the land crushed with exactions. Nor is that all. I hear that you have broken your marriage vows." The king leaped to his feet, his face aflame with astonishment and wrath. St. Hugh, having launched this quiverful of telling shafts, got up, smiling and serene, and retired. The king, glowering like a spoiled boy, watched him as he went out. "If all the bishops in the realm were like that," he exclaimed, "kings and princes would be powerless against them."

No wonder that Hugh has been known in history as 'the hammer of kings.' When weak and faithless John came to the throne, Hugh dealt with him also. On one occasion he said to him, "I hope I can trust what you say. You know how much I hate lying." And once at Fontevrault, the bishop pointed out to John over the church door a sculpture of the Last Judgment with a group of crowned kings being led away by devils to the smoking pit.

St. Hugh died in 1200, in great tranquillity, and while the brethren about him sang the *Nunc Dimittis*, his pure soul departed in peace.

NOVEMBER 18

*ST. HILDA, V.Ab.*

(A.D. 679)

St. Hilda was what the Wise Man would have called a 'valiant woman.' Most founders have been content, regarding it as burden enough, to rule a monastery of either men or women, as their sex might indicate. St. Hilda presided over monasteries of both, and more than this, she even had bishops under her conventual sway. Not only did she undertake to rule these diverse elements, but she did it exceedingly well. She was a Northumberland woman of princely extraction, but was born in exile, the Mercian conquest of that land having driven her people



into asylum among the West Saxons. She was baptised by St. Paulinus during his brief but effective mission in the north.

She had presided over the great religious house at Hartlepool for nine years when she made her later foundation at Whitby. Her friendship was sought by St. Aidan, and the kings of the country were glad to seek her counsel. But she did not reserve the treasures of her wisdom and charity for these only. The humblest of her subjects, or the poor hind from the moors, knew well that he could always find sympathy and strength in her advice.

When, in 664, the great council was held which brought the Northumbrian Church into conformity with the practices of the rest of the western world, it was at St. Hilda's convent at Whitby that it was convened. She died about 679, having given more than thirty years of beneficent rule to her monasteries, planting justice, piety, temperance and peace wherever her sway was acknowledged. She was one of the really great women of the Christian Church through the ages.

NOVEMBER 19

*ST. ELIZABETH OF HUNGARY, W.*

(A.D. 1231)

St. Elizabeth was the daughter of Andrew, king of Hungary, but only a very small portion of her brief life was spent in the 'apostolic kingdom.' While a mere infant, she was betrothed to Ludwig, the eldest son of the Landgrave of Thuringia, and was sent in a silver cradle to the home of her future husband. As the little girl grew up, her heart was often saddened by the unkindness of her future mother-in-law. In her sorrow, her naturally pious nature turned to her crucified Redeemer. She found her solace in prayer, and in ministering to His suffering members.

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Her charity was boundless, so much so that her husband, who was himself a man of great devotion, sought to limit what he feared was her too indiscriminating love for the poor. One day she was on her way to relieve a sick peasant when her husband met her and asked what she had in the folds of her cloak. She threw it wide open, and, behold, instead of the generous provisions she had abstracted from the royal larder, her bosom appeared full of roses.

Her married life with Ludwig was happy, but it was terminated after a few years by his death on the crusade with the Emperor Frederick the Second. One of the brothers of the dead Landgrave seized the throne, and drove the widowed Elizabeth from the palace. Many were the hardships which now befell her. Through great suffering she was made perfect. When only twenty-four years old, Elizabeth was delivered from the sorrow of this world, having, as the collect for her feast declares, 'in a short time fulfilled a long time.'

NOVEMBER 20

ST. EDMUND, K.M.

(A.D. 870)

He would be a rash man who would attempt to tell again, in a few words, the story of King Edmund the Martyr, for perhaps no finer thing has ever been written than what Thomas Carlyle has given us in *Past and Present*. There was little of the hagiologist in this canny Scot, but here is his story :

'One thousand years ago there dwelt a man in these parts of the name of Edmund, King, Landlord, Duke, or whatever his title was, of the Eastern Counties. His life has become a poetic, nay, a religious mythus ; though, undeniably enough, it was once a prose fact, as our poor

lives are ; and even a very rugged, unmanageable one. How, it may be asked, did this Edmund rise into favour ? Really, except it were by doing justly, and loving mercy to an unprecedented extent, one does not know. The man, it would seem, had walked, as they say, humbly with God ; humbly and valiantly with God ; struggling to make earth heavenly as he could ; instead of walking sumptuously and pridefully with Mammon, leaving the earth to grow hellish as it liked.

‘ Certain heathen Danes, coming into his territory and proposing heathenism, confiscation, spoliation, and fire and sword, Edmund answered that he would oppose to the utmost such savagery. They took him prisoner ; again required his sanction to said proposals ; but these involved the betrayal of his people and his Faith ; the young king would not listen to them for a moment. “ Can we not kill you ? ” they cried. “ Cannot I die ? ” answered he. And he died, under barbarous tortures, refusing to his last breath.

‘ “ Well done ! Well done ! ” cried the hearts of all men. They raised his slain and martyred body ; washed its wounds with fast flowing and universal tears ; tears of endless pity, yet of a sacred joy and triumph – the beautifullest kind of tears ; indeed, perhaps the beautifullest kind of thing ; like a sky all flashing diamonds and prismatic radiance ; all weeping, yet shone on by the everlasting Sun ; and *this* is not a sky, it is a Soul and living Face.’

NOVEMBER 21

*ST. COLUMBANUS, Ab.*

(A.D. 615)

This Saint was born in Ireland about 559. He was one of those many Irishmen who, in the centuries following the

conversion of their country, spread themselves over Europe with a flaming zeal for the salvation of the pagans.

Columbanus was a great scholar, and a man of powerful personality. Kings and popes were brought into subjection to his wisdom, and his monastery at Luxeuil in France was in its time one of the greatest centres of learning and sanctity in the Christian world. He had so great a number of monks under his rule that he was able to organise the ancient *Laus perennis*, the perpetual praise of God, which went on with relays of monks, their voices 'unwearied as those of angels,' so that there was no moment of the night or day when a devout group was not singing His praises in the great choir of the monastery church.

He was an impetuous defender of the Faith and champion of morals, and a man of his sanctity and vigour could not fail to make many enemies amongst the rough nobles and princes of his time. Like another St. John Baptist, he did not hesitate to rebuke wickedness in the highest places. After his many years' service at Luxeuil, he had to flee for his life. Going into Italy, he threw himself into the struggles of the Church there against the heresies which distracted her at that time. He finally settled at Bobbio amongst the Apennines, where he founded a monastery. His fame soon brought him many disciples, and he ruled there with his wonted holiness until November 21st, 615, when, surrounded by his brethren, and strong in his confidence in God, he went to his reward.

NOVEMBER 22

ST. CECILIA, V.M.

(A.D. 230)

In Rome in the third century there lived a beautiful maiden of the name of Cecilia, the daughter of an ancient

and noble house. Her parents were pagans, adherents of the ancestral worship of Rome. But Cecilia had learned, from some household slave, perhaps, of the God who had become Incarnate for us, and she had dedicated her life to the Crucified. Her parents had arranged a suitable marriage for their daughter with a wealthy young pagan named Valerius. Cecilia told him that an angel of God watched over her. The young man trusted her, accepted the Faith and was baptised. Then, his eyes being opened, he too saw the glorious angel who joined with his virgin wife in singing praises to God. After gaining great merit by his good works, Valerius received the martyr's crown, which was awaiting the Christians of that time. Not long were he and Cecilia to be separated. The prefect of the city gave orders that she should be put to death, and so the maiden-martyr, who had lived here below to sing the praises of her Saviour, passed to take her place in the celestial choirs.

NOVEMBER 23

*ST. CLEMENT, B.M.*

(A.D. 100)

Clement was one of the faithful of the apostolic times. In his letter to the Christians of Philippi, St. Paul writes of him as among those 'whose names are in the book of life.' He was well known in heaven, but little known on earth. Aside from the fact that he was bishop of the imperial city, no record of him is preserved beyond the story of his martyrdom under Trajan.

St. Clement was banished to Pontus, where he worked in the marble quarries. There he found many Christians who had been condemned to banishment and imprisonment for their Faith. He ministered to them continually, and his faithfulness as a pastor amongst his fellow-sufferers

brought him to the attention of the authorities. Refusing to cease his ministrations, he was condemned to be cast into the sea with an anchor fastened about his neck. His body was recovered by his disciple Phebus. He is supposed to have suffered martyrdom about the year 100.

There is a beautiful tradition that, when he was cast into the sea by his executioners, angelic hands built a shrine beneath the waves for his holy body. He has ever been a popular Saint throughout the West, and many churches, both in America and Great Britain, are dedicated in his honour.

It is to be regretted that this New Testament Saint, whose name St. Paul declared to be written in the book of life, should not have a proper service assigned him in the Prayer Book. His Mass, however, is celebrated each year in a continually increasing number of parishes. The prayers of this Saint seem to be of especial value in helping souls to stand firm in the Faith.

NOVEMBER 24

*ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS, C.*

(A.D. 1591)

This Saint was the son of Gonzáles di Yépez, a gentleman of Old Castile. John was born in 1542. He was educated by the Jesuits at Medina, and at the age of twenty-one he entered the Carmelite Order. He was ordained to the priesthood four years later. Just at this time St. Teresa, who was pressing her great work of reform, came to Medina, and hearing of the extraordinary virtue of the young brother, she engaged his co-operation, and their association gave to the Church and to their Order two yoke-fellows who wrought as few others have done for the good of religion.

St. John's strict life gave offence to the older Carmelites, whose guilty consciences saw in his reforms an indictment of their laxity. He was imprisoned by the authority of these recalcitrants, but after six months he was released through the influence of St. Teresa. Later his reforms were approved and he rose to high rank in his Order. In 1591, however, at a chapter of the Order held at Madrid, the issue was squarely fought out, and the *regula mitigata* triumphed. St. John was deposed from his posts of responsibility, and was sent for discipline to the monastery presided over by one of his bitterest opponents, who imprisoned him again, treating him with heartless cruelty. This continued until a short time before his death, when the provincial superior, learning of the manner in which he was being oppressed, ordered his instant release. Needless to say, it was not from the humble, patient Saint that the provincial received word of the state of affairs.

It was during the period of these persecutions that St. John composed his matchless works of mystical theology. As one reads the glowing pages of *The Obscure Night of the Soul*, *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, or *The Living Flame of Love*, one finds much autobiographical material. When men were trumping up every charge against him, when all seemed for the time to forsake him, when even his friends on receiving letters from him burned them lest the receipt of them might involve them in his disgrace, the abundant consolations of the Holy Ghost rendered his sufferings sweet to him, and filled him with joy which increased in proportion as he was the more abandoned by creatures. When crushed and maligned, and everywhere spoken against, he could write : ' The soul of one who serves God is always plunged into joy, always keeps holiday, is always in her palace of jubilation, ever singing with fresh ardour and fresh pleasure a new song of happiness and love.'

Few writers have had his faculty of encompassing in brief, sober expression such vast reaches of mystical thought;

and through it all there shines the rich glow of an incomparable spirit of poetry. Had Shelley been a great Christian mystic, he might well have written these words on the subject of death : ' Perfect love of God makes death welcome, and most sweet to a soul. They who love thus die with burning ardours and impetuous flights through the vehemence of their desires of mounting up to their Beloved. The rivers of love in the heart now swell almost beyond all bounds, being about to lose themselves in the ocean of love. So vast and serene are they that they seem even now to be calm seas, and the soul overflows with torrents of joy as it is about to enter upon the full possession of God. She seems already to behold that glory, and all things in her seem already to be turned into love, seeing there remains no other separation than a thin web, the prison of the body being almost broken through.'

In 1591, the Saint, at the age of forty-nine, worn out with his many labours and sufferings, gained his heavenly reward. As he lay a-dying, he repeated the Miserere with his brethren. Pressing a crucifix to his lips, he cried, " Glory be to God ; Lord, into Thy hands I commend my spirit," and gave up his soul to the Father.

NOVEMBER 25

*ST. KATHARINE OF ALEXANDRIA, V.M.*

(A.D. 307)

Many marvellous stories have been handed down about this Saint, most of which have no foundation in history. The historian Eusebius tells us that when the lecherous Emperor Maxentius was at Alexandria, he committed shameful abominations by carrying off the wives and daughters of the citizens. His passion, however, was defeated by the virtue and holy resolution of a young virgin,



Katharine, who was distinguished even in this great seat of learning for her deep knowledge of religion and philosophy. Enraged at being baffled, the tyrant sent her into exile, and stripped her of her wealth.

This seems to cover the authentic history of the Virgin Katharine. Later traditions declare that her tormentors sought to break her on the wheel, when a bolt of lightning shattered the engine and released her. It was also said that her body was borne by angels to Mount Sinai, where it remains to this day. These traditions are to be regarded with caution, if not suspicion, but it might be added that they are too ancient and too universal to be lightly cast aside as wholly worthless.

NOVEMBER 26

*ST. PETER OF ALEXANDRIA, B.M.*

(A.D. 311)

If St. Katharine of Alexandria is regarded as of doubtful authenticity, not so St. Peter, who ruled as Bishop of Alexandria at the same period. He came to the see in the year 300, at which time he must have been an old man, for he had been a sufferer in the Decian persecution fifty years before. He governed the Church in Alexandria for twelve years, during nine of which the Christians passed through the fiercest of all the persecutions, that of Diocletian, all the more furious because it was the final paroxysm of the dying rage of paganism.

St. Peter had to contend with heresy as well as with paganism, and it was in his time that the error of Arianism, which declared the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity to be a creature, first reared its iniquitous head. In the persecutions, St. Peter comforted the confessors by word and example, and to the martyrs he was a spiritual father indeed.

In 311, it was supposed that the storm of persecution had passed, but in that year the Emperor Maximin came to Alexandria and signalised his entry into the city by the murder of the bishop. He was seized without warning, and beheaded without undergoing any form of trial.

NOVEMBER 27

*ST. JAMES INTERCIUS, M.*

(A.D. 421)

This martyr was one of the noble army of athletes of God who made the Church in Persia glorious by their willing sacrifice. When the persecution began under King Isdegerdes, terrorised at the thought of disgrace and death, he outwardly conformed to the demands of the tyrant. His wife and mother were heartbroken at his apostasy, and the king dying a short time after, they wrote him a letter, urging him to return to his heavenly allegiance. 'For the sake of the king's favour you forfeited the love of the immortal God,' they said. 'Think where that king now lies by whose favour you set so much store. Unhappy man, behold he is crumbled to dust. Where now is your hope of favour from him? Where now is your hope of salvation from eternal dishonour and woe unless you turn to God and repent?'

When James read these words, he sat as one astonished, while the realisation of the awfulness of his rejection of his crucified Lord swept over him like a flood. But his repentance was not one of despair. Going to his friends he declared himself to have returned to the discipleship of Christ. His conversion was soon made known to the authorities, and on being arrested, he bore himself before the court with a poise and resolution that could have been born only of the divine grace which was so mercifully

renewed in his soul. When he was led out to execution his friends implored him to recant. "This death which you dread so much," he replied, "is but a small price to pay for the certainty of the treasure of eternal life." He suffered in the year 421 under Vararanes, the successor of Isdegerdes who had instituted the persecution.

NOVEMBER 28

*ST. STEPHEN THE YOUNGER M.,*  
(A.D. 764)

This Saint was born in Constantinople in 714. He was one of the many servants of God who have been called to account by wicked princes for their integrity, and who have stood before kings and not been ashamed. He became a monk in the monastery of St. Auxentius, and his high principles in an evil age aroused the wrath of the Emperor Constantine Copronymus, who diligently sought an occasion to have him put to death. This prince, who was engaged in the iconoclastic controversy, destroyed the sacred statues and pictures in the churches with a sacrilegious hand.

The Saint, being brought into the court, was ordered to trample on an image of our Lord. He took a coin in his hand which bore the image of the emperor. "What treatment would I receive if I stamped upon the image of the sovereign?" he asked. Of course, there was but one answer. "How much greater a crime would it be," he said, "if I should insult the picture of the King of Heaven."

Baffled by the Saint's wisdom, the emperor ordered him to be scourged and imprisoned, but he could find no occasion to put him to death. Finally, one day, in a rage, he cried out, "Will no one rid me of this monk?" The word was the same that led to the martyrdom of St. Thomas à

Becket in England centuries later when King Henry sought to rid himself of the holy archbishop ; and the consequence was the same. Several members of the Court, cruel and wicked men, hastened to the prison, and dashed out the brains of the Saint with a club.

NOVEMBER 29

*ST. RADBOD, B.C.*

(A.D. 918)

This holy prelate came of a princely house of the old Frisian race. He was reared in the Court of Charles the Bald, but in early manhood renounced the honours of a military life for the quiet of the cloister. He was made Bishop of Utrecht in 900, and in this office he found a fulfilment of the biblical prophecy that whosoever shall live godly in this life will suffer persecution. Violent opposition arising to his work of reforming the morals of his rude people, he was driven from Utrecht, and retired to Daventer, where, after serving God in a life of devotion, he happily gave up his soul to Him in the year 918.

NOVEMBER 30

*ST. ANDREW, Ap. M.*

(1ST CENTURY)

The Apostle St. Andrew was a native of Bethsaida in Galilee. He was the son of Jonas, and a brother of St. Peter. He is said to have preached in Scythia, and was martyred by being crucified on a cross shaped like an X, in Achaia. The legend of his joy in meeting death is well known. On approaching the cross, he cried, " Hail, precious cross,

which has been consecrated by the Blood of my Lord. I come to thee exulting and glad. Receive me with joy into thine arms. Long have I desired thee, and sought thee. Take me from among men and present me to my Master."

St. Andrew has been counted as one of the 'Champions of Christendom,' and is the patron Saint of Scotland. It is significant that in every mention of St. Andrew in the Gospels he appears engaged in helping someone who was in need or trouble. When he first learned of our Lord, he immediately went and brought his brother to Him. It was St. Andrew who sought and found that the few loaves and fishes were at hand when the people were fainting for want of food after having followed our Lord for many hours in the wilderness. And it was he who brought the Greeks to Jesus at the feast in Jerusalem. His name is Greek, and it is possible that his family had some Greek connection.

DECEMBER I

*ST. ELIGIUS, Ab.*  
(A.D. 659)

ELIGIUS was a skilled worker in metals, and having gained the confidence of Dagobert, the Frankish king, he was appointed to the honourable and lucrative post of master of the royal mint. He lived in great luxury, and his friend, St. Ouen (the Saint so nobly commemorated in the great church at Rouen), has left us an account of the grace of his stature, and the splendour of his apparel. But underneath his fine exterior Eligius bore the humble, childlike heart of a Saint.

One day, Dagobert, in a burst of friendship, told him to ask any favour within reason, and he would grant it. He expected a request for some worldly largess or preferment, but what was his amazement when Eligius replied, "Sire, if you would give me the wish of my heart, let it be a little measure of land in a quiet place where I may dedicate the remainder of my days to God in prayer." The king, at first, could not but think that the perfumed courtier was jesting, but convinced of his sincerity, he granted his request, and gave him a piece of land at Limousin. The situation was charming. Nestled in a bend of a river whose silver current swept around three sides of it, the site of the new sanctuary was one to please the eye and gladden the heart. Here Eligius built his monastery, and the fame of his sanctity soon drew to him a great company of souls of like spiritual ambition.

But he was not to be permitted, after all, to have his heart's desire. The see of Noyon falling vacant, Eligius was compelled to accept it, and here, as in every other post he had occupied, his holiness and integrity, his prudence and business sense, and his wise knowledge of human

nature, stood the Church in good stead. After a service which made his name ever after to be called blessed, he rested from his labours on December 1st, 659.

## DECEMBER 2

*ST. TRUMWIN, C.*

(A.D. 686)

We who live in ease in this soft age of the world too often fail to realise what our fathers had to endure in the evangelisation of the tribes in the early days of the Church. Trumwin was a monk of Whitby at the time when Scotland was dominated by the Picts, as savage a race as ever the Church sought to subdue to the gentle yoke of Christ. But their savagery did not deter him from penetrating the fastnesses of their rugged hills to bring to them the knowledge of God. Shortly after his consecration in 681 to this mission, some special atrocities were committed by these unruly barbarians which Ecgfrid, King of Northumbria, thought called for chastisement. But he had not reckoned with the strength of the enemy, for his army was scattered, and he himself was left on the field amongst the slain. In a few days murder and rapine flamed along the whole border, and St. Trumwin had to flee for his life, with his heart broken at the thought that the mission to which he had consecrated all, was unfulfilled. He went back to Whitby, awaiting the opportunity to return to his labours, which never came. He died there in 686. He was one of the emissaries who went with the king to Lindisfarne to persuade St. Cuthbert to accept the episcopate.

DECEMBER 3

*ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, C.*

(A.D. 1552)

St. Francis is universally credited with being the founder of modern foreign missions. In the sixteenth century, when Europe was in turmoil and bloodshed owing to the Reformation struggle, Francis, one of the first of the Jesuits, left his native country and went to India, never to return. There he gave himself up with heroic devotion to the conversion of the heathen.

His journeyings and labours were well nigh incredible. He went through all India preaching the Gospel, and reaping a great harvest. He evangelised Malacca and the surrounding country. He went on voyages over thousands of leagues of uncharted seas, carrying the Gospel to the islands of the Pacific; and he was the founder of the Church in Japan which was privileged in another generation to give thousands of glorious martyrs for the Faith.

His last ambition was to bring the light of Christ to the great Empire of China. He sailed to San Chan, an island off Canton, where he waited many weary months, seeking an entrance into that forbidden land. Here he fell sick of fever, and on December 2nd, 1552, alone, as far as earthly ministry was concerned, save for a Chinese attendant, he made the triumphant ending of his ministry.

His last hours were full of edification to those who learned of them from the Chinese lad. In his delirium he never ceased to pray, and to exhort imaginary audiences to love and serve the Lord whose yoke he had found so sweet. His last words were, "In Thee, O Lord, have I trusted. Let me never be confounded."



DECEMBER 4

*ST. OSMUND, B.C.*

(A.D. 1099)

We are accustomed to think of the Norman nobles, who came over with William the Conqueror, as brutal and rapacious men. Such many of them doubtless were, but not all. One of the most illustrious was Osmund, Count of Seez. His excellent qualities merited and attracted the favour of his prince, so that the Norman count found himself elevated to the English peerage, as Earl of Dorset and Lord Chancellor of the Realm. These honours did not lure his heart from the love and service of God. Amidst all the distractions of the life of a soldier, a courtier, and a magistrate, he set his affections on things above.

At length it was possible for Osmund to retire from the business of the world, and devote himself wholly to the worship of God without distraction. In those days, however, no one in his rank of life could long enjoy obscurity. In the year 1078, he was consecrated Bishop of Salisbury. Being ever zealous for the honour of God, Bishop Osmund erected and beautified many churches. He undertook also a very much needed reform of the services. Much confusion had arisen because of the coming into England of many foreign clergy, who brought with them the usages of their home churches. So excellent was St. Osmund's work in this regard, that churches outside his diocese followed his arrangement, and the Use of Salisbury—or of Sarum, as it was then called—became the one which generally prevailed in England until the desolation of Edwardine and Elizabethan times. These duties did not prevent his exercising a great love for souls. His charity was boundless, especially towards those who seemed the outcasts of society. He is said often to have attended public criminals to the place of

execution, ministering to them in their last moments with the tenderness of a father. He died in 1099.

DECEMBER 5

*ST. SABAS, Ab.*

(A.D. 531)

St. Sabas was a Cappadocian, and was born in 437. His father was a soldier, and his absence from home brought family disputes about property which so sickened the heart of the boy that, at a very early age, he entered a monastery at Flavianum. When he was thirty years old he began the life of a hermit in Palestine in the vale of Kedron, and soon had many companions of his solitude.

When Elias, Patriarch of Jerusalem, fell out of favour with the Emperor on account of that ever-troublesome heresy, Eutycheanism, he sent the abbots to Constantinople to intercede for him. All the embassy were admitted except Sabas, whose ragged and generally down-at-the-heel appearance caused the guards to think him an idle beggar who had pushed his way in from the streets. The Patriarch's letter mentioned Sabas in terms of high eulogy, which caused the emperor to ask for him, and it then transpired that he was not there at all. On search being made, he was found in a corner of the courtyard humbly saying his Office. All the abbots immediately began to beg for gifts, except Sabas who asked for nothing, but suggested boldly to the emperor that it would be well for him to mind his own business, and let the Church and the bishops alone. His courage impressed the emperor to such an extent that he kept him as his guest for several months before allowing him to return home.

St. Sabas was a literal case of the meek inheriting the earth, but, in this instance, the earth was the last thing

this meek man desired. Courted and flattered, he became a great power in the Empire, both in Church and State, but nothing could move him from his invincible humility. He feared God too much to stand in fear of any man. He died about 531 at his laura near Jerusalem.

## DECEMBER 6

*ST. PETER PASCHAL, M.*  
(A.D. 1300)

St. Peter was a Spaniard who was born in Valencia. He was appointed titular Bishop of Granada in 1262. That province was at that time in the hands of the Moors, who made frequent raids into the Christian territory, and carried away many captives into a degrading slavery. Worst of all, not a few of these, in order to alleviate their sufferings, renounced their Faith, and became followers of the false prophet. Peter's heart burned within him as he thought of the dishonour to our Lord, and of the awful peril in which these apostate souls were placed. He determined to be Bishop of Granada in fact as well as in title. He founded the Order of Mercy for the redemption of these poor captives, and he went in person and himself negotiated the ransom of hundreds of Christian exiles.

So bold and active was his ministry, especially in winning back to the Faith those who had fallen away, that he himself was made prisoner by the Moors and thrown into slavery. When word was received in Spain of this, a great sum was sent to secure his release. He was not, however, the kind of spirit to avail himself of such an advantage. He himself remained in slavery, and used the money to ransom a large number of women and children.

The Moors had a great respect for him, and a little accommodation on his part might have led to his discharge.

But in the face of certain martyrdom, he continued his ministrations wherever the opportunity presented itself. Exasperated by his constancy, the Moorish governor ordered him to be put to death, and the old man, seventy-three years of age, amidst the tears and lamentation of his captive flock, was beheaded on January 6th, 1300. His body was delivered to his friends, and they were allowed to take it with them to Spain.

DECEMBER 7

*ST. AMBROSE, B.C.D.*

(A.D. 397)

The grace of God, which raises the poor and lowly to be Saints, can accomplish the yet more difficult task of elevating those of high station to sanctity. St. Ambrose was of exalted birth, being the son of the Prætorian prefect of Gaul. It was but natural that he also should enter the service of the Empire. At the age of thirty-four, we find him already occupying the important post of governor over two provinces in Italy.

In this capacity, Ambrose was present in the cathedral in Milan, in order to maintain peace at what promised to be an exciting election to the episcopate. Suddenly a child's voice cried out, "Ambrose is bishop." The multitude at once felt this to be the will of God, and despite his remonstrances, the governor became bishop.

However unexpectedly Ambrose was called to his holy office, he was not remiss in the discharge of its duties. He was no respecter of persons. He rebuked the heretical Empress Justina, and refused to let her have even one church for Arian worship. When the really great emperor, Theodosius, in a moment of passion, ordered a massacre in Thessalonica, Ambrose refused to let

him enter the cathedral. It was not until the emperor had done public penance, lying prostrate on the pavement of the church, that the heroic bishop would restore him to communion.

Ambrose had the happiness of assisting in the conversion of, and baptising, his brilliant young contemporary, Augustine. An old legend tells how, on that memorable occasion, the *Te Deum* was composed, Ambrose, in his ecstasy, singing one verse, and then Augustine another. A very charming story, but unfortunately there is no truth in it. The *Te Deum* was written by St. Nicetas, Bishop of Remesiana, who was a contemporary of these two great Saints. St. Ambrose, after a life of unsparing labour for the Church, went to his rest in 397.

#### DECEMBER 8

### *THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY MARY*

By the Immaculate Conception is meant that, while the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was conceived in her mother's womb by the ordinary processes of human generation, in the first instant of her Conception she was cleansed from every taint of original sin, in virtue of the merits of Christ, which were applied to her by anticipation. The consequence of this miraculous preservation was that, when the Son of God took flesh of her, He did not take sinful flesh, but, as the Apostle St. Paul declares, He took only 'the likeness of sinful flesh.'

This did not mean that the Blessed Mother was incapable of sinning. She could have sinned, but 'full of grace,' as St. Gabriel declared, she was ever faithful to this grace, and was therefore preserved sinless all the days of her life. Greater glory to her that she could have sinned

and did not than if she had been inherently incapable of sinning.

We sometimes hear the great St. Bernard of Clairvaux quoted as opposed to the doctrine of our Lady's Immaculate Conception. The reference is to a letter which he wrote to certain canons at Lyons, rebuking them for keeping this feast. But the passage is quoted out of its context. He was not rebuking the doctrine, but was calling them to account because, without the proper authorisation, they had introduced a new festival into the kalendar. In this same letter, the Saint goes on to say that he would accept it if the pope authorised it, which he certainly would not have said had he thought the doctrine involved in the feast to be false. Even those who hold extremist views of the pope's infallibility would never say that his word could make right that which was wrong.

This feast in its development is especially connected with the Anglican Church. Anciently it was called the Feast of the Conception, but we find in the thirteenth century in France the Abbot Helchinus introducing the Feast of the Immaculate Conception ; its observance, however, was not of obligation, being left to the will of the people.

In England, however, in a council held in London in 1287, it was made obligatory, and another council in London in 1328 again enjoined it as binding upon the faithful. It was slow to make its way in Rome and, while widely observed, it was not made a feast of precept until 1708. The doctrine had never been defined by the Catholic Church as a necessary part of the Faith. In 1854 it was so defined by Pius IX, and Roman Catholics now regard it as necessary to be believed in order to salvation. No other part of the Catholic Church has taken this position. It is everywhere else a matter of pious opinion. Writing, before 1854, of the attitude of the Roman Church, Alban Butler says, 'The prudent reserve of the Church in her public prayers is a caution to her children, whilst they maintain

this pious sentiment, not to exceed the bounds which she has prescribed them.’<sup>1</sup>

The same devout author says, ‘From that instant (of her Conception) the Eternal Word of God which was to take flesh of her, looked upon it as particularly incumbent on Him, in the view of His future Incarnation, to sanctify this Virgin, to enrich her with His choicest gifts, and to heap upon her the most singular favours with a profusion worthy His omnipotence. . . . Almighty God, therefore, was pleased to preserve this holy Virgin from contracting any stain of sin, whether original or actual.’

DECEMBER 9

ST. BUDOC, B.C.

(7TH CENTURY)

Little is known of St. Budoc other than that he was Bishop of Dol in Ireland, and, by the holiness of his life, made so profound an impression on men that they have never been able to forget him. The stories told of him are wholly without foundation, but are delightfully characteristic of the legends of the Saints which the old Irish bards used to sing up and down the land.

It was said that his father was of the house of Goelo, in Brittany, and his mother was the beautiful and holy Azenor, ‘tall as a palm, bright as a star.’ Her beauty aroused the jealousy of her step-mother, who by shameful accusations, turned the heart of her husband against her. She was unjustly condemned, and the fact that she was soon to give birth to her child did not prevent the execution of

<sup>1</sup> Butler in his *Lives of the Saints* under this date, gives a succinct but very complete history of the doctrine of Our Lady’s Immaculate Conception. It should be read, keeping in mind, however, that he was a Roman Catholic and wrote nearly a century before this doctrine was declared to be for his co-religionists a necessary part of the Faith.

the heinous sentence that she should be coopered up in a cask, and thrown into the sea. The cask bobbed up and down on the Atlantic for five months, during which time she gave birth to a boy, the mother and child being attended by the angels. At last they were thrown up on the beach in Youghal harbour in County Cork, Ireland, where the cask was discovered by a peasant. He, supposing it to be full of wine, was in great glee at his find, and proceeded to broach it with an augur. To his amazement, a voice from within cried, "Do not hurt the cask." "And, b'faith, who might you be?" asked the Irishman. "I am a baby desiring baptism," replied the voice with great severity. "Let the cask alone, and go instantly to the Abbot of Youghal, and bid him come and baptise me." The Irishman tore off to the abbot, who thought he was either drunk or crazy. "Absurd, get you gone," he cried, "you are making sport of me!" The peasant then produced an argument the cogency of which could not fail to convince anyone who knew anything about Irishmen. "Does your Reverence really think," he exclaimed, "that I would be here telling you of the cask if I had found anything in it better than a baby?"

The abbot hastened to the shore, gently stove in the barrel, and extracting the mother and child, baptised it by the name Budoc, and had it brought up in his own household.

The obvious ending of the story is not wanting. Of course, something dreadful happened to the wicked step-mother, and the father, at last convinced of poor Azenor's innocence, sailed away to Ireland to find her. Mutual explanations were forthcoming, they flew into each other's arms with great joy, and lived happily ever afterwards.

We laugh at the old legends, but speaking seriously, the Saint, the power and holiness of whose life were such as to make it possible for such experiences to be attributed to him, must have been well worthy of the veneration of the ages.



DECEMBER 10

*ST. EULALIA, M.*

(A.D. 303)

The pathetic circumstance about the persecutions of the Christians in the early ages of the Church was that no age or condition was spared. Little children were torn from their mothers' arms and sent to the stake along with strong men. Eulalia was a little girl who lived with her parents – simple peasant folk – on a farm outside the gates of Merida, the capital of Lusitania in Spain. The Diocletian persecution of 303 began in the far east and spread slowly, but with relentless march, across the whole Empire. Little Eulalia heard her elders talking with bated breath about the terrible tragedies that were being enacted, and of the glory of those who were privileged to suffer for Christ. Thrilled with the thought of winning her crown by showing her devotion to our Lord whom she loved with all her heart, the child slipped away from home, and reported herself to the magistrate in the city as a Christian. The judge ordered her a whipping, as one would deal with a naughty child. But he little knew the spirit that dwelt in this frail body. No suffering could move her, and through the tortures she endured her one cry was, "Lord Jesus, hear my prayer." She died on the rack, her soul flying to God as joyfully 'as a dove flies to its nest.' The Court ordered her exposed, but we are told that a gentle fall of snow came from the skies, and covered her shattered little body with a pure white pall.

DECEMBER 11

*ST. DANIEL STYLITES, C.*

(A.D. 489)

Daniel was one of the most famous of pillar Saints of the East, of whom there were many. He was a disciple of St. Simon Stylites, and in his time wielded an influence almost as wide and holy as did his master. He lived in the days when the Church was a prey to heretics from without, and to spiritual wickedness within, but in those ages, despite their evil lives, men did know and venerate a Saint when they saw him, and St. Daniel from the top of his pillar comforted the afflicted, checked with his frown many excesses, and was able to give counsel to emperors and patriarchs, which was for the good of the Church and her people.

Basiliscus, the Emperor, was a Eutychian, and his courses of evil and oppression, together with his patronage of the heretics, aroused a fierce revolt in Constantinople. Acacius, the orthodox patriarch, unable to still the storm, begged St. Daniel to come to the city. The old man descended from his pillar, but he had lost the power to walk, and was carried in a litter. Basiliscus, with a heavy guilt on his conscience, was terrified at the approach of the holy man, and fled to his country place. Daniel's entry into the city was like a triumphal procession. He pursued the fugitive emperor, and clamoured for admission, but the gates were barred against him. Daniel returned to the city, and the cowed Basiliscus begged him to come and see him privately, which he refused to do, upon which the wretched man came and grovelled at the feet of the Saint. It was all of no avail, for his long list of unnatural crimes, as well as his offences against the Faith, determined the people to bring his reign to an end, and the new Emperor, Zeno, was greeted by the

faithful as their deliverer ; but, save that he was not a heretic, he was little better than his predecessor.

St. Daniel returned to his life of prayer, broken of heart at the tribulations of the Church. His life was nearing its end, and in a beautiful letter he sent words of comfort to those who loved the ways of Sion. On December 11th, 489, in the very early morning, under the crystalline stars of a winter sky, the old man said his last Mass, offering up the Holy Sacrifice for the needs of the Church. Three hours later he closed his eyes to the world to open them amidst the abodes of the Blessed. His body was buried at the foot of his pillar, and around this shrine grew up the great monastery of St. Daniel, where through many centuries thousands of holy men spent their lives in praise to God for the life and example of their father and founder.

#### DECEMBER 12

#### *ST. VALERY, Ab.* (A.D. 622)

Valery was a native of Auvergne, and, like so many of the Saints, in his youth he kept his father's sheep. While sitting amid his flocks as they grazed along the green hillsides, he is said to have learned the whole of the Psalter by heart. While yet a youth, he took the monastic habit, and so perfect was his life of obedience that if one wanted to know what the Rule called for at a given hour, he had only to go and observe what Valery was doing.

He later entered St. Columbanus' monastery at Luxeuil, and when that great monastic leader was driven from France by a wicked king, Valery remained behind to gather up the fragments that remained, and rebuild what sacrilegious hands had overthrown. In his day there were still many pagans in France, and the power of his preaching and

the force of his example brought many of them to the acceptance of the Gospel. He went to receive the recompense of his happy perseverance on this day, 622.

DECEMBER 13

*ST. LUCY, V.M.*

(A.D. 304)

It must have been a constant subject for wonder to the pagan world that the early Christians so willingly and bravely endured all manner of tortures rather than renounce their unseen Master. This wonder must have become frank amazement when the sufferers were weak women and children. Knowing what might very likely be her fate, St. Lucy at an early age dedicated herself entirely to Christ, vowing perpetual virginity.

St. Lucy valued little the things of this world, but the things of the Spirit were very real to her. Accordingly, she urged her mother, who was ill with a persistent disease, to go with her on a pilgrimage to the tomb of the virgin martyr Agatha, in Catania, there to ask the prayers of the Saint. After long prayer at the holy place, Lucy fell asleep. In a vision, the glorious Agatha appeared to her, assured her of her mother's recovery, and foretold the martyrdom of Lucy herself. Her mother was, in fact, restored to health immediately.

The mother and daughter, on returning to their home, in the city of Syracuse, began to distribute their large fortune among the poor. A young heathen, who had hoped to marry Lucy and thus enjoy her wealth, denounced her to the governor as a Christian. She exulted at the thought of martyrdom. "I have sacrificed all that I had; now I offer the one sacrifice which remains, myself," she joyfully cried to her Divine Bridegroom. The fire was kindled

about her, but it harmed her not. At length, a sword-thrust brought her the martyr's crown. She suffered in the Diocletian persecution about the year 304.

DECEMBER 14

*ST. VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS, B.C.*

(A.D. 600)

St. Venantius is principally known in history for his great hymns which have edified the Church of God for fifteen centuries. His best known hymn is the 'Vexilla Regis' (The royal banners forward go), which he wrote on the occasion of a great procession into Poitiers, where he lived, when a portion of the True Cross was brought into the city as a gift from the emperor at Constantinople to Queen Radegund. Among the hymns by this author is the well-known, 'See the destined day arise,' and the sequences for the great festivals, beginning with the words, 'Hail, festal day.' It is worth noting that the most famous stanza of Venantius' Vexilla Regis, 'O Cross, our one reliance, hail,' was not written by him, but was added by a later hand. This verse, according to the custom of the Church very generally, is sung kneeling. Venantius was born in Italy and died Bishop of Poitiers about the year 600.

DECEMBER 15

*ST. CHRISTIANA, V.*

(3RD CENTURY)

This Saint was born in Cappadocia, and in her early girlhood she was taken captive by the people of Georgia, the little country east of the Black Sea. She was sold into

slavery to a pagan chieftain, whose wife was restored from a dangerous illness through Christiana's prayers. The chieftain wished to reward her, but she refused his presents, declaring that her only wish was that he would worship the true God in whose power lay all love, mercy and healing.

The following day the chief was hunting in the forest, and a dense fog arose in which he completely lost his way. He prayed to his gods, but to no avail. Night was coming on, he was alone and on foot, and the prospect of spending the night in the wilds, which were full of savage beasts of prey, was not a pleasant one. It then occurred to him to pray to Christiana's God. This he did, and in a few minutes a strong breeze blew away the mist, and, with the setting sun shining in bright and friendly fashion, he found his way to his castle with little difficulty.

Seeking the young slave-maid, he demanded to know who her God was, and, in her simple way, she told him the story of the love and sacrifice of Jesus for the souls of poor sinners. He believed, and with a throng of his fellow-countrymen, he was baptised. St. Christiana is venerated as the apostle of Georgia. She lived in the third century after Christ, the exact dates of her life not being known.

DECEMBER 16

*ST. ADELAIDE, Queen*

(A.D. 999)

This Saint was the queen of King Lothair, of Italy, on whose death she was called upon to endure a series of persecutions which recalls the life of St. Elizabeth of Hungary. She was thrown into prison, but through the assistance of a priest she managed to escape. She took refuge with her brother Atto at Canossa, and Berengar, her persecutor, besieged them there until the castle was reduced to the

direst extremity. They were about to surrender, when one morning an arrow was shot over the wall from the forest, with a letter attached to it. On examination it proved to be from a messenger who could not make his way into the castle, announcing that Otho, Duke of Saxony, had crossed the Alps and was coming by forced marches to their relief. The besiegers fled on this approach of reinforcements.

A bit of tender romance is not out of place in the lives of the Saints, and all Italy rejoiced when Otho, having rescued the young widow, proceeded to marry her. Otho died in 976, and was succeeded by Otho II, his son by Adelaide. For a time life went happily, but Otho was at disagreement with his mother in many things, and finally drove her from his palace. In a short time, however, ashamed of his un-filial conduct, he recalled her. She met him at Pavia, and Otho fell on his knees before his mother, begging for forgiveness. Her saintly soul had long since done with all resentments, and she knelt beside him, and embraced him in her arms, as they mingled their tears of joy at this reconciliation.

St. Adelaide was a veritable mother to her people, and amid the cruel strife of that iron age she devoted herself to making peace between the many contending factions. As a peacemaker, she won for herself the beatitude of being numbered among the children of God. She died in 999, at Salz, having first received the Sacraments with great devotion. She was fifty-eight years old.

DECEMBER 17

*ST. OLYMPIAS, W.*  
(A.D. 410)

Olympias has been called 'the glory of the widows in the Eastern Church.' She was born of illustrious descent in

368, and, when very young, married Nebridius, the treasurer of Theodosius the Great, who died twenty days after his nuptials. The young widow consecrated her wealth, which was great, to the service of the poor, and gave herself to a life of prayer and penance. Her virtue was the admiration of the whole Church, and Saints like St. Chrysostom and St. Epiphanius, rejoiced to count her among their friends, and maintained a correspondence with her. She was one of the last of his friends to whom St. Chrysostom bade farewell when he went on his sad exile, never to return again. Because of her loyalty to him, she suffered much at the hands of his enemies. She was stripped of her property, the convent of nuns she had organised was scattered, and she herself, after having to face many and shameful accusations, was driven into exile like her holy patron. She died about 410, as the result, it is said, of the cruel oppressions she had to endure.

DECEMBER 18

*ST. GATIAN, C.*

(3RD CENTURY)

Those who have admired the soaring grace of the Cathedral at Tours, and knelt in awe amid the splendour of the Mass in that noble church, find it hard to realise that there was a time when the Christians of this region were driven to worship in the holes and caves of the earth, a time when the practice of the Faith of Christ was proscribed under pain of death. Such was the condition about the year 250, when St. Gatian came from Italy to bring Christ to the benighted Gauls. He was the first Bishop of Tours, a stranger in a strange land, holding up a light in a dark place ; but no perils or persecutions, no threatenings or hate, could subdue the undaunted spirit of this knight of God. The



pagans of this country were said to be especially devoted to their superstitions, and their anger flamed swiftly and fiercely against any who assailed them. Often, for days at a time, this courageous apostle had to hide in the forests and gather his little flock under the shelter of some lonely cavern for the celebration of the Mysteries of our Holy Religion. But faith and perseverance triumphed, and Tours became a Christian city. St. Gatian, despite the perils he suffered, finished his course in peace, after an apostolate of fifty years.

DECEMBER 19

*ST. NEMESION, M.*

(A.D. 250)

Occasionally our police will arrest a man on a charge of what is called disorderly conduct, just in order to detain him until investigation of some much more serious charge can be made. Likewise were the early Christians sometimes taken into custody on some light accusation until their religion could be enquired into. Such was the case of Nemesion in Alexandria, who was accused of theft. He repudiated the dishonouring accusation with indignation, and had no difficulty in immediately showing his innocence and obtaining an acquittal. But before he left the court the indictment for being a Christian was produced. The judges supposed he would enter some defence, but, smiling as though he was quite diverted at their ignorance and simplicity, he boldly declared his Faith. He was scourged and otherwise tortured, and finally burned at the stake.

DECEMBER 20

*ST. AMMON AND HIS COMPANIONS, MM.*

(A.D. 250)

These Saints were martyred at Alexandria with St. Nemesion, who is commemorated on December 19th. The chronicle narrates that as these martyrs and some others were undergoing the torture, one unhappy Christian's constancy seemed to give way, and he showed indications of denying the Faith. Upon this, four soldiers of the guard who were standing near the tribunal, sprang forward and loudly encouraged the sufferers to hold fast and win their crowns. The judges were amazed at what they regarded as their impudence, but they were still more amazed when, ordering their heads struck off, they saw with what gaiety of heart they hastened to the place of execution, eager to win the laurel which all the favour of Roman imperialism could never bestow. These blessed ones were named Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy and Ingenius, and rejoicing to suffer with them was an old man named Theophilus – the name means 'Beloved of God' – the one who for a moment had seemed to weaken in his holy resolution under the torture, and who was saved by the timely encouragement of the soldiers. They all won their crowns along with a multitude of holy companions in the persecution instituted by the Emperor Decian in the year 250.

DECEMBER 21

*ST. THOMAS, Ap.M.*

(1ST CENTURY)

The Gospel of St. John is the one which tells us most about the Apostle St. Thomas. His doubting spirit did

not have its root in a want of courage, for when our Lord insisted on returning to Judæa after the Jews there had threatened to slay him, it was Thomas who cried to the other disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with Him." St. John narrates the circumstances of St. Thomas' questions in the Upper Room regarding the way of Christ, and it is he who tells how this Apostle refused at first to believe in the Resurrection. He also gives the account which shows St. Thomas, for all his doubts, to have been the first of the Apostles to confess in exact language the Deity of Christ - "My Lord and my God !"

The historian Eusebius, who wrote in the fourth century, states that St. Thomas preached the Gospel in Parthia, and Sophronius, a somewhat earlier writer, whom St. Jerome quotes, says that he planted the Cross amongst the Medes, Persians, Hyrcanians, Bactrians, and adjacent peoples. There has been a persistent tradition that St. Thomas preached in the country now known as India, but there is much doubt as to its accuracy.

The Greeks, following certain apocryphal Acts, assign India as the field of his missionary operations. These Acts are not to be taken as history, but they contain some of the most beautiful and suggestive passages to be found in early Christian literature. One story, for its significance and beauty, is worth re-telling. It is said that the Apostles drew lots as to where each should go, and Thomas drew the lot which indicated India. Doubtful of his powers, he refused to go. Our Lord then appeared to him and renewed the assignment. Thomas, in a passion of self-distrust, cried, "Lord, whither Thou wilt, but not India, not India !" While he was pondering the claim that was being made upon him, in a dream he saw an Indian, Habban by name, pass by in quest of a skilled workman. And as he passed, he was stopped by Christ who said, "You are seeking a workman ; I have a slave, a skilled man who needeth not to be ashamed. I will sell him to you. There

he stands"; and the wounded hand pointed to St. Thomas. And Thomas cried, "As Thou wilt, so be it"; and he arose and went with Habban.

Where St. Thomas suffered martyrdom is not known, but the most ancient authorities generally agree that he won his crown in one of the countries to the east of Palestine.

DECEMBER 22

*SS. CYRIL AND METHODIUS, CC.*

(9TH CENTURY)

About the year 850, a solemn embassy appeared in Constantinople bearing credentials from Boigoris, King of the Bulgarians, a powerful barbarian tribe living in the territory now occupied by Moravia and parts of old Hungary. The letters were addressed to the Emperor Michael III, requesting that priests be sent to teach the Bulgarian people the Christian Faith. On the advice of the Patriarch Ignatius, St. Cyril, a native of Thessalonica, was chosen for the mission. As he had been taught their language he was enabled, in a short time, to instruct them, and great multitudes of them received baptism.

Returning to Constantinople for a time, the Saint prepared for further spiritual campaigns amongst the barbarians, this time taking with him his brother Methodius, who was something of an artist. The king had not yet given in his personal allegiance to the Faith, and Methodius, in order to impress him the more, made a peculiarly realistic and fearsome picture of the Judgment. This was effective, and the king was baptised.

The brothers made a translation of the Liturgy into Slavonic, and, if the old authorities are to be credited, the translating of the Holy Mysteries into so barbarous a tongue caused some scandal amongst the more conservative folk in

Rome and elsewhere, but the practice was confirmed by the proper authorities after some delay, and the Slavonic Liturgy has been used ever since.

The exact dates of the death of these two Saints are not known. They are venerated as the apostles of practically all the region now commonly known as the Balkan States, and also of large parts of the present country of Czechoslovakia.

DECEMBER 23

*ST. SERVULUS, C.*  
(A.D. 590)

This Saint was palsied from his childhood. Being the child of poor parents, he was taken by his brother daily and laid at the door of St. Clement's Church in Rome, where he asked alms from the passers-by. Unlike most Italian beggars, especially those of the present day, he was a man full of charity, and the alms that were given him he shared generously with those who had less than himself, and at his station close by the church door, he spent much of his time in prayer. He used to ask those who came and went to read the Scriptures to him, and in this way he learned much of them by heart. He found great joy in the music of the church which he caught through the open door as the choir daily sang the praises of God.

After many years spent in suffering, his feeble frame sank. As he lay dying he begged those about him to sing, but he suddenly arrested their song. "Hush," he cried, "I hear sweet music from heaven." And in a listening attitude, he expired. He died about the year 590.

DECEMBER 24

*ST. IRMINA, Ab.*

(A.D. 707)

Dagobert II, King of the Franks, had a daughter, Irmina, who was betrothed to a young Count named Hermann. The day was set for their nuptials, and all was going as merrily as the traditional wedding-bell. A young man named Edgar who was in Irmina's household, conceived an insane infatuation for the young princess, and on the eve of the marriage he told Count Hermann of a foreign jeweller near Trêves, where the court resided, who had some rare gems for sale, and proposed to take Hermann to him that he might purchase them as a gift to the bride on her wedding-day. The unsuspecting young man went with him across the Mosel bridge to the top of the rock where now stands the Mariensaüle. Without warning, Edgar flung his arms about the count, and threw himself with Hermann over the precipice. No one seems to have noted their absence, but when the hour for the wedding came no bridegroom appeared. A few days later the two bodies were found at the foot of the cliff, locked in a death embrace.

Irmina retired from the world, receiving from her father a property near Trêves which was converted into a convent, where she lived a life of exemplary devotion in the midst of her spiritual daughters. She is said to have entered Holy Religion when she was fourteen years old, in 676. She died in 707.

DECEMBER 25

*THE CHRISTMAS SAINTS*

Our Lord Christ was not a hermit. His delights were among the sons of men. In the abodes of joy or sorrow, at the marriage feast at Cana, or in the death chamber at Capernaum, He found His happiness in being with His people. When He was conceived in His blessed Mother's womb, the heart of the unborn Saviour was not content until the joy and mystery of this transcending event could be communicated to the Saints in the house of Zacharias at Ain Karim. When He was born in Bethlehem, not only were angels and archangels called from heaven to celebrate this joyous night, but they were commissioned to send the humble shepherds from the hills to the stable, that His heart might experience the joy of receiving from them the homage of their love.

Nor was this all. Not even the love and adoration of His Holy Mother and St. Joseph, and that of the saintly shepherds, could satisfy the quenchless love of the Sacred Heart. He must needs send a mysterious summons far across the world to the Wise Men of the East, requiring them to come with swift, unstaying steps, that He might find His joy in receiving the worship of these representatives of the Gentile nations to whom He was to be a beacon Light, guiding them to heaven even as the star guided the Magi to the manger-throne.

It is, therefore, no fortuitous happening that even on Christmas we are instructed by Holy Mother Church to have in commemoration certain saintly souls as we kneel in adoration of the Divine Child. She has, without doubt, been guided by the Spirit thus to gather her Saints about the feet of the Infant Christ. Nor is this privilege confined to those who served in this world at the time of that glorious

Advent. Others, of later ages, are numbered in the Church's kalendar among the Christmas Saints. On this day so sublimely does He overshadow them that we cannot linger over the details of their earthly service of the Holy Child. Indeed, it seems significant and fitting that, with most of them, we know little of the details of this service, for their lives are hid with Christ in God. But their names live for evermore.

There was a company of martyrs of Nicomedia, who, scorning to purchase life by a betrayal of their Saviour, on this day died joyfully amid the flames for His Name's sake. There was the noble Anastasia – her name means Resurrection – with the world at her feet, who preferred the riches of His love to the treasure and honours the world could give ; Adalsendis, the virgin of Christ, who counted herself happy that the Lord accorded her the high privilege of entering heaven on Christmas Day, and whose heroic mother, lest her grief should mar the solemn gladness of the Nativity, would allow her eyes to shed no tear until the Day of the Holy Innocents, when she mingled her weeping with that of the heart-bereaved mothers of Bethlehem ; St. Peter the Venerable, who suffered many things with patient love for righteousness' sake ; Fulk, the godly troubadour, who inflamed the spirit of England's lion-hearted king and his crusading knights to go forth valiantly in defence of the Holy Sepulchre ; and Eugenia, the Alexandrian virgin, who reckoned the hot blast of the fires of martyrdom a foretaste of the refreshing draughts which God, on this day, was to give her of the water of the river of life.

These, and a multitude of others, we celebrate at Christmas, looking to their holy example to teach us, and at their prayers to help us, in whatever place and manner God may ordain, to keep our lives consecrate to Him who on this day humbled Himself to be born of a Virgin.



DECEMBER 26

*ST. STEPHEN, M.*

(1ST CENTURY)

The name Stephen is a Greek word meaning a wreath or crown. He was the first deacon in the Church, and has the glory of being the first martyr to win his crown by suffering for Christ. His name stands at the head of the list of deacons as given in Acts vi., and it is interesting to note that the names of all his companions in this holy office are Greek names. The occasion of the appointment of these deacons was the complaint made by the Greek Christians in Jerusalem that their widows were neglected in the administration of the Church's charities. These deacons were appointed to look after this serving of tables, and, doubtless Greeks were placed in the office in order to make sure that there would be no further complaint from the same quarter.

Nothing is known of St. Stephen beyond what is told in the Acts, but that little is enough to give the Church occasion to glory in him until the end of time. He is supposed to have been a young man. His martyrdom undoubtedly had much to do with the conversion of Saul of Tarsus, who acted as the official witness of the Jewish Sanhedrin to see that the sentence, which, by the way, was wholly lawless (see St. John xviii. 31), was carried out.

The feast of St. Stephen is one of the most ancient in the Church, and its institution antedates even that of Christmas. It was first kept in the East, and was thence carried to the West. It first appears in a kalendar of Ptolemy Sylvius in 448, but it is mentioned in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, a work which dates back to the second and third centuries.

His death had a profound influence on the progress of the Church, not only in its almost certain effect on Saul of

Tarsus, but because it was on account of this persecution that the Christians were scattered through the land, fleeing for their lives, and wherever they went, they took with them the message of the Gospel. So, the first martyr wrought more mightily in his death than he had done in his life.

DECEMBER 27

*ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, Ap.*  
(1ST CENTURY)

Besides the record in the Gospels which are open to all, many details of the life of 'the disciple whom Jesus loved,' are preserved for us by the early historians of the Church. He was appointed by our Lord as the guardian of His Mother, and this probably accounts for the fact that St. John was the only one of the Twelve who did not go afar on missionary journeys. He probably remained at Jerusalem until after the death of the Blessed Virgin. Later he went to Ephesus and was active in the work of the Church in that great heathen city. During the persecution of Domitian he was taken to Rome, and an attempt was made to put him to death in a cauldron of boiling oil. He was miraculously delivered, however, and was sentenced to imprisonment on the island of Patmos, where he had the visions which he records in the Book of Revelation. He lived to an extreme old age, and it is said that when he was so enfeebled that he could not preach he would be taken to the pulpit in the church, where his sole exhortation was, "Little children, love one another." He is supposed to have died about the year 100.

DECEMBER 28

*THE HOLY INNOCENTS*  
(1ST CENTURY)

St. Matthew gives us in his Gospel the account of the massacre of the Innocents in Bethlehem by Herod, in his vain endeavour to find and slay our infant Lord. The feast was established in the Church at a very early date. St. Irenæus, who was born about 130, speaks of it, and there is abundant mention of it in the ages immediately following. The day has always seemed to have a certain penitential character. Anciently, in the city of Rome no meat was eaten on this feast, and the colour used for the vestments on this day is violet, except when it comes on a Sunday when red is substituted. According to the Responsory of St. Gregory the Great (A.D. 597), the day was observed very much as was a day in Lent, all joyful anthems being omitted. This practice has persisted in the Church, the Gloria in Excelsis and the Te Deum being omitted from the services.

DECEMBER 29

*ST. THOMAS BECKET, B.M.*  
(A.D. 1170)

This Saint was the son of a Rouen merchant who had settled in London. His mother seems to have been a devout soul, who brought her boy up 'in the fear of God, and the reverence due to Christ's mother.' This excellent woman is said to have connected her child in a quaint way with her charities. From time to time she would put him in the balances, and in the opposite scale would pile food and clothing for the Lord's poor, until they equalled the weight

of the child which the loving-kindness of the Lord had bestowed upon her.

He was educated at Paris, and on returning home entered into the civic life of London. Archbishop Theobald of Canterbury was his patron, and introduced him into the ecclesiastical life of England, in which his grace of manner and speech, and his great ability, put him swiftly on the road to high advancement. In 1155, he was made Chancellor of the realm under King Henry II. Becket lived in great state, but maintained a life of purity rare in his day.

In 1161 Archbishop Theobald died. Becket was very close to the king, who desired him to succeed to the vacant throne. Knowing that the king's way of interfering with the Church's affairs could not be tolerated by an archbishop of courage and spirit, he warned the king of his apprehension, that should he take the office, their friendship would be broken. Henry thought it was only a formal, meaningless protest, and laughed it aside. He was soon to learn that Thomas Becket's conscience was not a thing that could be swept aside with a jest.

Thomas had never been ordained to the priesthood, and here he was to assume the helm of the Church. He was priested without delay, and on May 27th, 1162, was consecrated in Canterbury Cathedral. With his assuming the episcopate, his mode of life changed. He laid aside all luxuries, put on the habit of St. Benedict (he was the first Archbishop of Canterbury who was not bred up a monk), and proceeded in both his public and private life to show himself every inch an archbishop.

The predicted clash with the king was not long in coming. The points at issue were not in themselves of paramount importance, but they involved the principles of Erastianism, the thrusting of the secular arm into the Church's affairs. The diocesan bishops were corrupt, and subservient to the hand that could dispense worldly rewards, and the archbishop stood well nigh alone. They pleaded with him to

temporise or yield. Becket stood like a stone wall. He had personally everything to gain, and nothing, in the worldly sense, to lose, by yielding to the king, who would have been content with a mere gesture so long as it saved the royal face. But Becket was not of that stamp. "All your thoughts are on your personal safety, none on the cause of God and the Church," he said, in reply to the bishops' craven importunities.

In a memorably violent council at Northampton, on October 6th, 1164, the king and his henchmen showed their hand unmistakably. The archbishop saw that flight alone could save him, and went into exile at Pontigny in France. Henry, in fierce wrath, expelled all Becket's relations and friends from the realm, and it is said that four hundred persons, men and women, and even children at the breast, were driven forth in the depth of winter with inhuman precipitation. They were received by the religious houses in France, and the sight of their misery brought Henry's name into general execration.

After several years, a truce was patched up, and the archbishop returned to Canterbury on December 4th, 1170. His entry into the city was a triumphal progress, conducted by the poor, who had good cause to love him. But it was a progress to martyrdom. The next morning, officers of the king appeared, and demanded the withdrawal of the excommunication of certain of those who in his absence had invaded still further the prerogatives of the Church. The Saint, of course, refused, unless they showed repentance. The king was in Normandy, when word was brought that the Saint had refused to allow him to say who was worthy of Communion and who was not. Henry burst out in a torrent of denunciation of the archbishop, concluding with the fiery words addressed to his knights, "And you, false varlets, look on, and have not attempted to rid me of this insolent priest."

The ill-considered words were pregnant with fatal issues. Four knights of the royal household, Reginald Fitzurse,

Hugh de Morville, William de Tracy, and Richard le Breton, stung by his reproaches, hurried from the royal presence, crossed to England, and on December 29th, sought the archbishop in his palace, and ordered him to remove the excommunications. Since the Saint had braved death rather than follow the king's command, he would hardly accede to the order of four obscure knights. After a loud altercation, the knights withdrew to arm, and in the meantime the Saint was dragged by the monks through the cloister into the church. His murderers hotly pursued, and overtook him in the north transept.

It was five o'clock of a dark December afternoon, and as they entered the church, they cried, "Where is Becket, where is the traitor?" There was no response, but when Reginald cried, "Where is the archbishop?" instantly the answer came from the steps of the altar of St. Benedict, "Here am I, archbishop but no traitor," and covering his face with his hands, he awaited the assault. It was quickly over. Tracy directed a blow at the martyr. Edward Grim, one of the monks, interposed his arm, which was nearly severed by the blow which at the same time cut away the scalp of the archbishop's head. As a second blow was driven home the martyr exclaimed, "Into Thy hands, O God, I commend my spirit," and sinking to his knees, he added, "For the Name of Jesus, and in defence of the Church, I am willing to die." Hugh Mauclerc, a retainer of one of the excommunicated persons, had accompanied the four knights to the cathedral, and placing his foot on the archbishop's neck, with the point of his sword he scattered his brains over the pavement. Thus triumphed for the moment the king's party, but it was the sword-strokes of the murderers of the Saint which dealt the death blow to the pretensions of the kings of England to dominate England's Church. Henry is known in history chiefly for the penance he willingly underwent, and the name of St. Thomas became the most honoured throughout the world of all the sons of Britain.

DECEMBER 30

*ST. SABINUS, B.M.*

(A.D. 303)

We generally associate Assisi with St. Francis, and are apt to think that the little Umbrian hill-town was unknown until his fame introduced it to the world. Its history, however, began long before the Christian era, and in the early centuries it had its Christian heroes and martyrs.

Sabinus was Bishop of Assisi in the Diocletian persecution in 303. He was arrested by the Roman tribune Venustianus, and when asked to venerate a statue of Jupiter, he responded by throwing it on the pavement and breaking it. In a rage, Venustianus ordered his hands to be cut off. He was then thrown into prison, but such was the constancy of his resolution and the sweetness of his brave spirit, that he converted several of his accusers to the Faith. To the amazement of the town, among these were Venustianus and his family. When the Emperor Maximian heard of this, he sent Lucius, a man of an iron heart, to Assisi, who arrested Venustianus and his family, together with all those who had been brought to Christ under the influence of the holy bishop. They were all excuted, together with the bishop, and their bodies buried at the neighbouring town of Spoleto.

DECEMBER 31

*ST. SYLVESTER, B.C.*

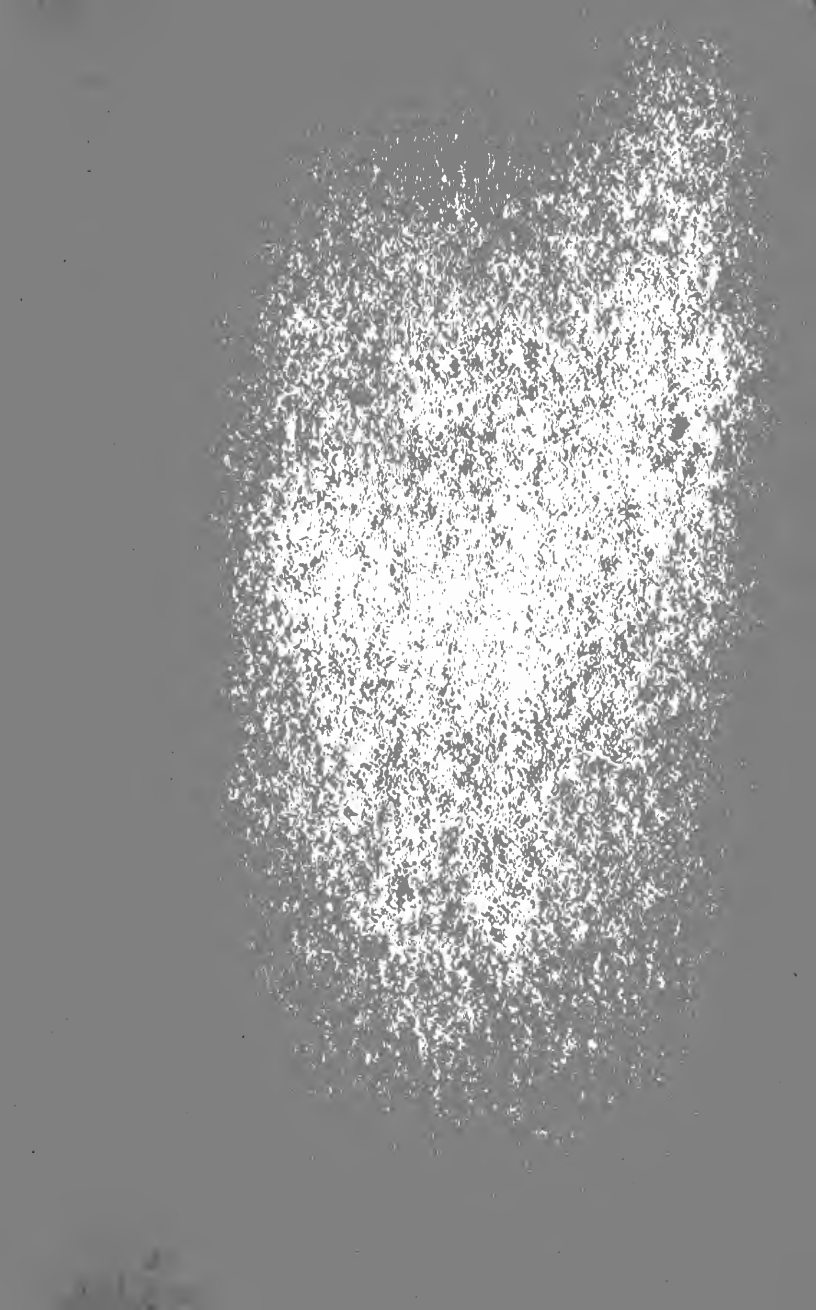
(A.D. 335)

St. Sylvester's name has been chiefly famous because by accident of consecration, he happened to be Bishop of

Rome at the time of the great Nicene Council of 325, although he was not present at its sessions. There is an old legend, which is without historical basis, but which carries with it a wholesome lesson, that the Emperor Constantine was smitten with leprosy, and was cured by being baptised by this Saint. Constantine was credited with having murdered both his wife Fausta, and his son Crispus. He suffered the pangs of a terrible remorse, and applied to a pagan philosopher, named Sosipater, for consolation. Sosipater told him there was no pardon for such a crime. It seems that on his last visit to Rome, the emperor learned, probably from Sylvester, that a broken and contrite heart God would not despise, and in the end he was cleansed from the leprosy of his sin in the waters of baptism.

In art, this Saint is represented treading on a dragon, as a symbol that it was during his pontificate that the power of paganism was broken in the Roman Empire.







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